Hafa Adai!

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you support Bordallo's "Bonitan Tåsi" bill, which would give Guam management rights over the Marianas Marine Monument?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Reprogramming

The House of Representatives grants Gov. Fitial unlimited authority to reprogram funds in FY 2010.

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New Attaché

The Philippine Consulate General's new labor attaché for the CNMI talks with the *Saipan Tribune.*

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Pneumonia Death

Brittany Murphy died from pneumonia, with prescription drugs and anemia also playing a role.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 20

DPH: 20,000 avail of H1N1 vaccines

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A total of 22,000 individuals on three islands have already availed of the H1N1 flu vaccine since the Department of Public Health began its extensive vaccination campaign last year.

Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez said that 19,565 individuals have been vaccinated on Saipan, 1,075 on Rota, and 1,360 on Tinian.

A total of 910 people were inoculated during the three most recent vaccination drives conducted by DPH: 436 during the Cervical Cancer Fair, 57 during the Head Start symposium, and 417 during the Nutrition Assistance Program drive. The first two took place on Jan. 30. The NAP drive was held Feb. 1.

Villagomez said the mass vaccination drive will continue today at the Kagman Community Center and during the Little

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Restrictions on teen drivers eyed

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Driving or the application for a learner's permit by young adults below 18 years old will be further restricted for safety reasons once a bill introduced by House minority leader Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan) is signed into law.

Under House Bill 17-24, a learner's permit holder under the age of 18 will be restricted from driving a motor vehicle while using a cellular phone whether or

See DRIVING on Page 4

File photo shows a black widow spider.

Quarantine intercepts black widow spiders

Two female black widow spiders managed to enter the CNMI via shipping container but both were immediately intercepted by the Quarantine Section of the Department of Lands & Natural Resources' Division of Agricultur, according to a department statement.

Northern Marianas College CREES entomologist Dr. Marisol Quintanilla confirmed the spider specimen to be that of the black widow spider, *Latrodectus*

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FOR THAT GOOD SMILE

Dr. Kenneth D. Pierson, right, of the Saipan Seventh-Day Adventist Clinic, shows Leon Camacho, 8, Drevon Camacho, 6, and Allen Stafford, 7, the proper way to brush one's teeth during the clinic's "Give Kids a Smile Day" program yesterday morning. The clinic provided some 50 children with free dental treatment and related services, including extraction, examination, fluoride treatment, and oral health education.

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King: Commission has right to conduct site visit. PAGE 2

DPL begins campaign vs unauthorized billboards. **PAGE 3**

Local

King: Commission has right to conduct site visit

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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The Northern Marianas College's Board of Regents looks forward to the upcoming visit of a team from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, saying it has the right to conduct site visits as required by the accreditation processes.

"The Board of Regents looks forward to the visiting team," said board chair Janet King, adding that the commission has the right to take action to ensure that member institutions meet their responsibilities and that includes additional visits.

At the same time, King pointed out that it is the commission's responsibility to choose appropriate members for the visiting team. "ACCJC also has the responsibility to ensure that team is appropriate to accomplish the objectives of the visit."

She said the commission must select visiting team members, in consultation with the college, who are competent by virtue of experience, training, and orientation, sensitive to the uniqueness to the institution, and impartial, objective, and without conflict of interest.

The commission accepted NMC's midterm report during its recent assembly but it told NMC that the "series of events" at the college may affect its accreditation status. The board recently suspended NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, pending the result of investigations against her. The board named Lorraine Cabrera interim president.

To see whether NMC is still in compliance with the other requirements of the accreditation, the commission said it will arrange a special visit to NMC.

No micromanagement

King stressed that the board won't be micromanaging the college, in compliance with the accrediting commission's recommendation not to do so.

"The board has taken seriously a previous [ACCJC] recommendation not to micromanage and to rely on the interim president as the chief administrator to operate the college in accordance with the policies and procedures of the governing board," King told *Saipan Tribune*.

She said the board, through regular reports on various processes at the college, is kept updated, but the details and decision-making rest with the president.

She pointed out that the board is an independent policy-making body and, together with the college president, must adhere to their roles and responsibilities as per policy.

"The Board of Regents members adhere to their appropriate roles and responsibilities as per board policy," King emphasized.

Although it receives updates on the management of the college, she said they leave the day-to-day administrative matters to the president.

"Periodically the board conducts briefing sessions to inform its various standing committees, which include the personnel committee, the fiscal and legislative committee, and the program committee, and to provide overall guidance. Sometimes during these sessions there is direct input from faculty, staff, and the public. These processes are always in line with the established procedures, and allow for effective oversight by the board of the college," she said.

SUPPORTING THE HUMANITIES CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mobil Oil Marianas Islands Inc. president and country manager Gennaro Cioffi, second from left, presents a $1,500 check to NMI Council for the Humanities board members Richard Moreno and Joann T. Aquino. Also pictured is Mobil CNMI terminal manager Anthony Wenceslao. The Humanities Council will use this donation to support its public programs and educational initiatives.

Fitial wants new anti-child abuse law amended swiftly

'Felony' liability is 'too severe' for negligent harm

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signed into law a bill revising a child abuse statute but he urged the Legislature to amend it swiftly to address some concerns, including placing a distinction between felony and misdemeanor liability on child abuse cases.

"Even if it makes sense to place liability on persons in a position of trust, surely felony liability is too severe for negligent harm," Fitial said in signing House Bill 16-269 into law on Jan. 29.

The measure, which is now Public Law 16-53, expands 6 CMC Section 5312 to place criminal liability not only on custodians but on anyone in a position of authority over a child.

This includes teachers, counselors, babysitters, doctors, nurses or anyone in a substantially similar position.

The measure makes it a felony to fail "through willful or negligent act or omission" to provide a child with adequate supervision, medical care, food, clothing or shelter with the result that the child's physical or mental health and well-being are harmed or threatened.

Fitial said a teenaged babysitter who failed to report that a child was malnourished could be made a felon.

This also means a doctor who failed to pick up on signs of sexual abuse during a routine checkup of a child patient could be made a felon, he said.

Fitial said typically in criminal law, bare negligence does not give rise to felonies, only misdemeanors.

"At the least, the mens rea (mental state) for felony child abuse should be gross negligence, if not recklessness," the governor said.

'Chilling effect'

The governor said because child abuse under the Act includes not only willful abuse but neglect to adequately clothe, feed, and shelter, it has a disproportionate impact on the indigent.

"If health care professionals and counselors who care for the indigent may be exposing themselves to felony liability, the bill may have a chilling effect on the provision of necessary services," Fitial said in a Jan. 29 letter to House Speaker Froilan C. Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) and Senate Pres. Paul A. Manglona (R-Rota).

The governor said the act is also "dangerously vague."

While custodians clearly have the full range of responsibilities to supervise, clothe, feed and shelter children in their custody, the same is not true for all persons in a position of authority, he said.

For example, a doctor's authority clearly extends to medical care, but not to supervision or shelter.

'Do it correctly'

The governor said if the CNMI child abuse statute is to be revised, it must be done correctly and distinguishes between felony and misdemeanor liability according to the level of criminal intent and the degree of harm.

He said acts and omissions arising from mere negligence or resulting in minimal harm should be treated as misdemeanors. Just as the criminal laws distinguish between misdemeanor and felony assaults based on mental state and severity of injury, so should child abuse cases," he said.

Many instances of negligent child abuse arise from ignorance of how to be a good parent, how properly to care for and discipline children.

"There should be room in the criminal law to bring these parents to account for their actions and teach them proper parenting skills without branding them as felons," said Fitial.

Former Rep. Rosemond Santos (R-Saipan) introduced the bill that became Public Law 16-53 or the Revised Child Abuse Act of 2009. Santos is now chief prosecutor at the Office of the Attorney General's Criminal Division.

Body of missing Guam free-diver recovered

HAGATNA, Guam—The body of a missing free diver was recovered yesterday by the Guam Police Department Rescue boat, some 15 hours after being reported missing.

U.S. Coast Guard was notified at 8pm Thursday of a missing free-diver near a reef off Inajaran, Guam. The family reported the fisherman's last known position to the Coast Guard's 24-hour command center in Apra Harbor.

The 31-year-old male was last seen at 11am of Feb. 4, and was reportedly diving with fins, snorkel, black shorts with green stripes and a blue rash guard. Guam Fire and Rescue personnel launched a shore and sea side search and the Coast Guard launched a crew aboard a 25-foot small boat, a 110-foot patrol boat and Navy HH-60 to search an area from the tip of Cocos Island to Achang Reef.

In addition, crews aboard a Navy HH-60 helicopter from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25, the Coast Guard 110-foot patrol boat *Washington*, Station Apra Harbor's 25-foot small boat, Guam Police Department and Guam Fire Rescue boats and jet skis joined the search at first light Thursday.

The missing free diver was recovered at 11am yesterday.

The Coast Guard reminds mariners of the importance of swimming with a buddy and early notifications for missing persons in the ocean. For maritime emergencies, call the Coast Guard 24 hours a day at (671) 564-USCG or 911. ***(USCG)***

WANTED

NEWS REPORTER

Saipan Tribune, the CNMI's first daily newspaper, is looking for a full-time news reporter to join our team.

Qualifications:

- College graduate (bachelor's or associate's degree)
- Must have above average writing skills, with strong grasp of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and syntax;
- Curious and must have a passion for news;
- Methodical, detail-oriented, and can work fast within strict deadlines;
- Fast learner, self-starter, aggressive, and a team player;
- This is a full-time job. Must be able to work on holidays, weekends, late nights, and on short notice;
- Computer literate

If you think you have what it takes to be part of this dynamic team, e-mail your most recent résumé and portfolio to editor@saipantribune.com. You may also drop it off at the *Saipan Tribune* office on the second floor of the JP Center on Beach Road, Garapan. On-island hires preferred.

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DPL begins campaign vs unauthorized signboards

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Acting Department of Public Lands Secretary Oscar M. Babauta is now reassessing the agency's policies and procedures to ensure that his department properly executes its mandate and goals. Among these is the compliance protocol for commercial leases, where some minor concerns have been identified.

Babauta notified yesterday Grace Christian Academy, one of the many entities that were found not complying with the agency's procedures, was notified yesterday to remove a signboard that is installed on a public property on Navy Hill.

In a notice to Rev. Raymond Kinsella, GCA president and board chairman, Babauta said the agency's records show that the school did not seek DPL's authorization to use a portion of the public land to install its signboard.

He said it is mandatory that a written request be submitted to the agency for approval to make sure it is accounted for by the government.

DPL gave GCA five days to remove the unauthorized signboard.

Babauta said the notice is a strong reminder of DPL policies that the public and private sector must be fully aware of.

He said the agency is willing to assist and work with the school if it wants to use the affected lot on Navy Hill.

The GCA issue, Babauta said, was initiated since the administration of his predecessor, former secretary John Del Rosario.

"Our compliance office is re-evaluating all the signs that are on public property and GCA is just among the entities that may not fully aware of the DPL policies. We're very much willing to work with them," he said.

In case GCA wants to use the public land for the same purpose, he said DPL will charge a minimal fee.

"We want to make sure that all these people go through the process. That's our goal," he said, admitting that many sign owners are not too familiar with the required permits and documentations.

Babauta, a former congressman, was appointed as the agency's new administrator last Monday. He did not seek re-election during the Nov. 7, 2009, polls.

House gives Fitial power to reprogram funds for NMHC

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

After a lengthy discussion, the House of Representatives approved yesterday a measure that gives Gov. Benigno R. Fitial unlimited authority to reprogram funds in Fiscal Year 2010 to help the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. meet its guarantor obligations in home loans provided to low-income borrowers.

NMHC has some $14.8 million in total guarantor obligations in home loans that are delinquent and in default, but its "immediate" need is $5.8 million so it won't lose its continued participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development home loan program.

In a 14-4 vote with one abstention, the House passed on first and final reading Rep. Ray N. Yumul's (R-Saipan) House Bill 17-15. One member, Rep. Sylvester Iguel (Cov-Saipan), was absent.

The bill now heads to the Senate.

The 14 "yes" votes crossed party lines. Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) said his abstention stems from a case he filed against the governor on reprogramming funds. He won the case.

H.B. 17-15, however, does not specify the amount that the governor has to reprogram to be able to help NMHC.

House members spent considerable time discussing and debating the bill before it finally passed

House minority leader Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan) was concerned about giving the governor "100 percent" reprogramming authority.

"It's almost irresponsible on our part," Benavente told his colleagues, saying that it's like giving the governor a "blank check." He said giving an unlimited reprogramming authority seems to indicate that the Legislature is not exercising its mandate to pass a budget.

He later asked his fellow lawmakers whether they could limit the reprogramming authority to 40 percent.

Benavente, a former speaker and lieutenant governor, voted "no" on the bill he initially co-sponsored.

Reps. Tony Sablan (R-Saipan), Ramon A. Tebuteb (R-Saipan), Trenton Conner (R-Tinian) and Benavente withdrew their names from the list of co-sponsors of Yumul's bill. Yumul is a former chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.

House Speaker Froilan C. Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) said he does not want to put the blame on the previous Legislature for not passing a timely budget before the start of FY 2010 on Oct. 1. But he asked Benavente to support the reprogramming bill "at least for FY 2010."

But Tenorio made it clear that he still prefers that the Marianas Public Lands Trust help NMHC, given the financial problems faced by the government. He said taxpayers should not be burdened with NMHC's problems.

Torres also expressed support to any negotiation with MPLT to help NMHC rather than reprogram money from the general fund.

Rep. Eliceo Cabrera (R-Saipan) asked his colleagues to pass the bill, saying it will help prevent homeowners from losing their homes altogether.

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) offered a floor amendment providing restrictions on hiring in FY 2010.

He said the budget deficit was a result of continuous hiring for non-essential positions.

The House unanimously approved Deleon Guerrero's amendment.

When Sablan offered an amendment to delete the bill's Section 3 in its entirety, another lengthy discussion ensued.

Dela Cruz, as well as Rep. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota), said deleting this section will defeat the purpose of the bill.

Sablan's floor amendment was defeated on an 11-8 vote.

The House then voted on passing the bill on first reading, but it was defeated on a 12-7 vote.

Minutes later, the House voted on passing the bill on first and final reading, which received 14 "yes" votes and four "no" votes and one abstention.

Rep. Ramon Basa (Cov-Saipan) reminded his colleagues that NMHC officials will again meet with lawmakers on Thursday, 10am.

The House session ended at around 1pm.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

From left, House minority leader Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan), Rep. Francisco Dela Cruz (R-Saipan), Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan), Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb (R-Saipan), as well as Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan), seated left, and Rep. Joseph Palacios (R-Saipan), seated right, confer during a break in the House session yesterday morning. After a lengthy discussion, the House passed on first and final reading Yumul's bill giving Gov. Benigno R. Fitial reprogramming authority to provide relief to the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. to meet its guarantor obligation in home loans.

Seven alien workers sue Labor

The Office of the Federal Ombudsman has assisted seven alien workers in filing separate lawsuits against the Department of Labor for refusing to give them an extension to seek new employers.

The seven workers—Xiuhui Yang, Marilou Dagum Caspillo, Maria Edna P. Clarin, Amor S. Balingit, Flora A. Abat, Yakui Yang, and Chunhui Wang—filed separate petitions asking the Superior Court to review Labor's orders.

Associate Judge David Wiseman waived the fee for the filing of the workers' petitions.

According to the petitions, the Labor orders were arbitrary, capricious, and violated their statutory, procedural and substantive due process rights.

Most of the petitioners had paid a $50 extension fee. The Labor administrative office later denied the workers' request for more time to find new employers. They appealed to the Labor Secretary, who turned down their requests.

Labor gave the workers temporary "umbrella permits." ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

SUPER MONDAY SPECIAL
Everyone is invited to watch the Super Monday at PauPau Bar & Terrace on Monday, February 8, 2010 Door opens at 8:30 a.m.
Breakfast buffet is available at $15.00 per person inclusive of iced-tea, juice and coffee.
The Palms on PauPau Beach, Saipan Micronesia
For more information or reservation, please call 322-3311.

OAG prosecutes 3 who allegedly stole spent shell casings at AMPRO project

The Office of the Attorney General has filed charges against three men who broke into a hazardous explosive removal project in Marpi and stole expended shell casings.

The OAG charged James Sanchez, 38; Ray Anthony Ayuyu, 37; and Matthew A. Igisair, 35 with theft, conspiracy to commit theft, and criminal trespass. The government summoned them to appear in court on Feb. 22 at 9am.

Chief prosecutor Rosemond Santos stated in the charging document that Sanchez, Ayuyu, and Igisair unlawfully entered the All-Hazard Management Professionals Inc. project site and stole expended shell casings on July 12, 2009.

Police said the defendants, when arrested that day, confessed that they sold the stolen scrap metals to a recycling plant in Lower Base.

Police investigation showed that at 10:47am on July 12, an informant alerted the Department of Public Safety about a theft incident at the AMPRO project.

The informant told police that scraps of metal have been stolen from the ordnance disposal pit. The informant provided the police with the descriptions of a pickup truck that was seen parked outside the fence of the project site.

Police officers later spotted the vehicle in San Roque and found out that the defendants on board had just come from a recycling center. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Record number of students nominated to U.S. Service Academies for Class of 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Rep. Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) has submitted his nominations to the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and the U.S. Naval Academy for the upcoming school year. Twelve Northern Marianas students were nominated, a record number.

"It is great that we had so many students who met the high standards to qualify for nomination this year," said Sablan. "Because this is also the year that we have twice as many positions open at the service academies for Northern Mariana Islands students."

Sablan introduced legislation to increase the number of slots at the academies last February, a few weeks after being sworn into office. He was able to have his proposal added to the annual Defense Authorization Act, which the President signed into law on October 28, 2009, just in time for this year's nomination process.

"We have to increase educational opportunity for our young people today, if we want to have a prosperous Commonwealth in the future," Sablan said. "Increasing the openings for our Northern Marianas students at West Point, Annapolis, and Colorado Springs does just that. And it gives our youth the chance to serve their country in positions of leadership."

Students at the service academies obtain their college education for free and are commissioned as officers in their respective branch of the military after graduation.

The 12 congressional nominees from the Northern Mariana Islands are:

■ **Matthew Anthony T. Aquino**: The son of Daniel Aquino, Jr. and Joann Aquino, Matthew is currently attending Mount Carmel High School and will graduate this June. He was nominated to the Air Force Academy, the Military Academy and the Naval Academy.

■ **Steven Paul Sonio Centino**: The son of Marlene Centino, Steven is a senior at Saipan Southern High School. He was nominated to the Air Force Academy and the Military Academy.

■ **Diana Choi**: The daughter of Choi Young Sup and Bak Soon Hee, Diana is a senior at Marianas High School. She was nominated to the Air Force Academy and the Military Academy.

■ **Grace Chung**: The daughter of Hyun Joon Chung and Jung Me Park, Grace is currently a senior at the Northern Marianas Academy. She was nominated to the Air Force Academy.

■ **Raena Pangelinan Cing**: The daughter of Raynaldo Mendiola Cing and Priscilla Pangelinan Cing, Raena attends Tinian High School and will graduate this summer. She was nominated to the Air Force Academy, the Military Academy and the Naval Academy.

■ **Federico Quintero Fernandez**: The son of Fidel S. Fernandez and Josephine Q. Fernandez, Federico is a senior at Marianas Baptist Academy. He was nominated to the Naval Academy.

■ **Min Joo Jung:** The son of In Young Jung and Ae Soen Jung, Min graduated from Mount Carmel High School in June 2009. He is currently attending the New Mexico Military Institute, the preparatory school of the U.S. Military Academy in Roswell, NM. He was nominated by Kilili to the Merchant Marine Academy in October.

■ **Denn M. Manglona**: The son of Senator Paul Manglona and Lydia Manglona, Denn will graduate from Rota High School this June. He was nominated to the Military Academy.

■ **Marvin Olopai Rabauliman**: The son of Jose and Mercedes Rabauliman, Marvin graduated from Marianas High School last year. He has been nominated to the Air Force Academy.

■ **John Mendiola Ramos**: The son of Luise Mendiola Ramos, John is a senior at Tinian High School. He was nominated to the Military Academy and the Naval Academy.

■ **Calvin Yang**: The son of Youn Geun Yang and Sung Sook, Calvin is a senior at Mount Carmel High School. He was nominated to the Merchant Marine Academy and also recommended to the Coast Guard Academy.

■ **John Yoon**: The son of Tae Hyung Yoon and Kyung A. Hang, John is a senior at Marianas Baptist Academy and is expected to graduate this summer. He was nominated to the Air Force Academy, the Military Academy and the Naval Academy.

Congressional nomination is not the final step in acceptance to the one of the service academies. Now that they are nominated by their congressman, each applicant will be reviewed by the admission boards at the academies. The boards select the best candidates from among the 4,000 or so normally nominated. Of those, 1,500 will be offered admission.

Before Sablan's legislation passed, the Northern Marianas could have only one student at each academy at a time. Now there can be two.

Admission is granted to students who meet the service academies' high standards of academic achievement, leadership potential, physical conditioning, and moral character.

"I am confident that these nominees will succeed if granted appointment and will represent the Northern Marianas well as cadets or midshipmen in school and as officers in the armed services after graduation.

"I wish them all the best of luck in obtaining admission, completing their studies, and serving their country," said Sablan. ***(PR)***

US, Japan air forces set live-fire training on FDM

SANTA RITA, Guam—The U.S. Air Force and Japan Air Self Defense Force will conduct live-fire training exercises on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on the following dates and times:

■ Feb. 8 from 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
■ Feb. 9 from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
■ Feb. 10-13 from 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon de Medinilla Training Area on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. The general public especially fisherman, commercial pilots and marine tour operators are advised to stay clear from this area during the times and dates indicated.

Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides access frequency that supports established training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. ***(PR)***

DPH

From Page 1

League opening on Feb. 14.

He emphasized that people who want to avail of the vaccine are not required to have a blue card from the Commonwealth Health Center.

Next week, school vaccination campaigns are set to focus on private schools: Mount Carmel School, Saipan Community School, Calvary Christian Academy, Marianas Baptist Academy, Saipan International School, and Ladera International School. These will be held on Feb. 16 and 17 starting at 8am.

Public secondary schools are also scheduled for vaccination such as Chacha Oceanview and Kagman High on Feb. 19; Marianas High School on Feb. 23; Saipan Southern High on Feb. 24; and Hopwood Junior High School on Feb. 25.

DPH emphasized that school staffers and students in 7th to 12th grade will be given the option to receive the doses either through shots or nasal sprays and students—except those 9 years old and below who have availed of the first vaccines—are required to have the mandatory consent forms signed by their parents.

The Commonwealth is slated to receive a total of 56,000 H1N1 vaccines to avert a swine flu outbreak. So far, it has already received 25,000 doses since last year.

The CNMI's aggressive effort in fighting the virus was recognized during a health meeting in Australia. The Commonwealth to date remains clean in terms of flu-related deaths compared to neighboring Guam, which has two fatalities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that between April and mid-November 2009, 47 million people were hospitalized and nearly 10,000 people died due to the H1N1 pandemic, with a vast majority of deaths occurring in children and elderly adults.

Flu experts earlier warned about a possible third wave of the H1N1 flu pandemic.

CDC officials on island

Secretary Villagomez introduced yesterday two visiting CDC officials who will be on island until next week: Janice McMichael, project officer serving the Pacific Islands' Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program; and Barbara Cooper, public health adviser for the Coordinating Office for Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response's Division of Strategic National Stockpile.

Villagomez said DPH is fully collaborating with the two officials and lauded the assistance and support provided the CNMI in its effort to combat the flu.

"They're here to help us and see how we can best improve our services," he added.

DRIVING

From Page 1

not it is equipped with a hands-free device, while consuming food or beverages, or while conducting personal grooming such as applying makeup.

The bill amends Chapter 5 under Title 9 of the Commonwealth Code.

It says that "learner's permits are valid until the holder turns 18 years of age, or until sooner canceled by law or suspended or revoked, or until the holder has successfully qualified for an operator's license of the same class as the learner's permit."

In introducing the bill, Benavente cited the importance of the so-called "graduated driver licensing" to reduce crash rates among novice drivers by gradually introducing them to higher risk driving situations.

Benavente cited information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stating that inexperienced drivers are a significant public health problem, and that motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death of young adults between the ages of 15 and 20.

"Speed, distractions and driver inexperience cause most crashes and those things can be controlled. Graduated driver licensing laws require inexperienced drivers to satisfy one or more requirements before being granted full privileges to operate a motor vehicle without supervision," he said.

Benavente said yesterday he will ask data from the Department of Public Safety about motor vehicle accidents as they relate to teenage driving.

A graduated driver licensing is a system designed to phase in young beginners to full driving privileges as they become more mature and develop their driving skills. Versions of graduated licensing have been adopted in most U.S. states.

Under Benavente's bill, anyone with a learner's permit is allowed to drive the class of motor vehicle for which the permit is issued, provided that the licensee has the learner's permit in his or her immediate possession while driving, and that he or she is not transporting more than one person under the age of 18 unless the person is a household member.

A licensed driver who is the learner's permit licensee's parent or guardian shall be in the motor vehicle and shall occupy the passenger seat beside the licensee whenever the licensee is driving between 10pm and 5am, the bill says.

An exemption to these restrictions is when the licensee is driving to and from his or her place of employment or school, but would need written verification or signed statement from the employer or parent/guardian, among other things.

QUARANTINE

From Page 1

sp., the statement stated.

It did not specify where the shipping container came from.

Black widow spiders, like snakes, are not endemic to the CNMI. The Commonwealth has an interdiction program has aims to prevent the entry of invasive or non-native species to the islands.

Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Dr. Ignacio T. Dela Cruz, DVM, commended the quick response of Quarantine officers Tina Guerrero and Tony Iguel, Quarantine inspectors Tom Santos and Charles Mendiola, and Customs inspector Abraham Falig for their action in containing and immediately sealing the container after inspection. The container was sealed by Quarantine Officers. DLNR DOA Quarantine procedures require any container containing possible invasive pests to be fumigated at cost to the consignee, and the fumigating company must be properly certified.

DLNR DOA Quarantine reminded the public of the importance of adhering to quarantine regulations.

"Such regulations are in place to help prevent the introduction of unwanted insects, fungus and/or virus, among others, into the CNMI," DLNR Secretary Dela Cruz said.

Smuggling plants, including plants containing soil, fruits, and seeds, as well as prohibited meat products increase the risk of potential invasive species or animal disease that may enter the CNMI. These smuggled plants or animal products pose a risk to the native plants and animals of the CNMI, as there are no natural predators to regulate their population, and they outcompete local species.

For more information on invasive plants and animals, or to learn more about the proper procedures to import agricultural or regulated products and animals, contact the Division of Agriculture, Quarantine Office at (670) 288-1045 or the CNMI Forestry at 256-3320. ***(PR)***

Cyclone Oli hits French Polynesia

PAPEETE, Tahiti (AP)—Cyclone Oli buffeted French Polynesia on Thursday, forcing the evacuation of thousands of residents and tourists to churches, schools and temples.

The archipelago that includes Tahiti was under red alert until the cyclone passes, and all roads were closed. Towering waves were buffeting buoys off the coast of Tahiti's capital, Papeete. French television showed a naval ship pitching in the storm.

Around 3,500 people in Tahiti and Moorea who risked being swept away or inundated by lashing waves were evacuated, officials said, and about 50 homes were destroyed in Moorea.

A dozen people were reported injured in Bora Bora, including one seriously injured after falling from a roof. Bora Bora is located in the Iles-Sous-le-Vent archipelago. Tahiti and Moorea are in another archipelago known as Iles-du-Vent.

Magali Charbonneau, senior adviser to the region's top French official, said on RFO radio that evacuees were being housed in churches and schools.

Charbonneau predicted waves up to 8 meters (26 feet) high, and urged families—especially children—to stay inside. Hundreds of homes were damaged, and communication and power lines were down. She said evacuees were being housed in churches, schools and temples.

A statement from the French regional commissariat said that more than 650 tourists were confined to secure hotels, but provided no further information. The statement said a fisherman was rescued at sea.

Winds overnight to Thursday averaged 150 kilometers (90 miles) an hour, with gusts at 200 kilometers (120 miles) an hour, and were expected to pick up speed, according to the statement. Meteo France, the national weather service, said the cyclone was gaining speed but moving south to less populated regions.

NMC Upward Bound celebrates TRIO Day

The Northern Marianas College Upward Bound Program will be inviting students, alumni, parents and leaders of the CNMI to join in the celebration of National TRIO Day, which will take place end of this month.

In the mid-1980s, Congress passed a resolution to assign the celebration of National TRIO Day on every last Saturday of the month of February. The resolution was to help recognize the needs of disadvantaged individuals and adults aspiring to improve their quality of lives through education and training.

The TRIO program coordinators assist eligible students to successfully attain a bachelor's degree (in their field of choice). The program provides various services such as tutoring, personal and career counseling, academic workshops, financial aid workshops and time management seminars. The facility at the NMC Upward Bound provides useful resources such as computers (with Internet academic access and office software), desks, working chairs, a comfortable study environment and reading materials to help in better understanding student options offered at Upward Bound.

TRIO Day also helps to remind the community by way of volunteerism. This year, Upward Bound participants will be volunteering at Triple J Superfresh Market on Saturday, Feb. 27, from 8am to 12pm. The volunteers will be assisting employees of Triple J as celebrity baggers.

"The TRIO programs have been making significant impact in the lives of many students," said NMC acting interim president Dr. Patrick Moran. "TRIO day is an important opportunity to celebrate the successes of the program, as well as to get the community acquainted with the free services available to help students succeed."

The TRIO Day Open House will take place on Thursday, Feb. 18, at the NMC Building J starting at 4pm.

For more information on the upcoming TRIO Day, contact NMC Upward Bound at 234-5498 Ext. 1278 or visit their office at the NMC As Terlaje campus. ***(NMC)***

Saipan has camels—at Immanuel United Methodist Church

The Immanuel United Methodist Church has been re-celebrating Christmas. Jan. 24th focused on the joy and hope of the shepherds. In "Time with Our Children," young shepherd boy Garrett Borja "walked six miles" to find Baby Jesus in the manger (made by Dale Carhill).

Garrett gave Jesus the only thing a shepherd boy had—his scarf and his pet lamb—to keep Jesus warm. When Mary and Joseph saw how very much Garrett loved his lamb they showed their love by asking him to keep it and thanked him for his scarf.

Last Sunday focused on the Wise Men, forgiving, and peace. In "Time with Our Children" the little wise ones studied the stars for a new one announcing Jesus' birth. In accordance with lay pastor Millie Carroll's story, they knew they needed to share hurts, forgive and cooperatively stick together in the desert to keep from getting lost.

Mark Deala then lifted volunteers Barbara, Helen and Garrett onto their camels and they scooted cooperatively for "up to two years" following the star to Bethlehem.

The camels were created by Mary Deala, Grace Dowez, Fina Rogayawa, Melissa Borja, WuMian and Eric Wang.

BRYAN JONES

During Immanuel United Methodist Church's Jan. 31st "Time with Our Children" wise ones rode (scooted) their camels to Bethlehem. From left to right: Barbara Petura, Helen Carhill and Garrett Borja.

Lay pastor Millie Carroll said, "It is especially meaningful as we think together about peace to remember the Wise Men, now believed to be astrologers from Iraq and Iran. Bryan Jones and JunMei Wang were asked to light the peace candle because of their work to end war and bring world peace. Instead of being a warrior king most then hoped for, Jesus came for peace, not war."

This coming Sunday focuses on love and angels with Mary Deala, Fina Rogoyawa and Melissa Borja opening the service with religious dance to *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, with special choir/guitar accompaniment music and Betty Busacay singing *O Holy Night* and ending with procession of the Peace Star (made by Mary). This is the final Sunday focusing on Christmas.

"Although we might again *before* December! Since all began with Christ's birth, re-celebrating Advent and Christmas is very meaningful," added Carroll.

IUMC warmly invites readers to this multi-aged Re-celebration Worship Service at 9am, Feb. 5. The IUMC in Chalan Kanoa is on Chalan Kanoa Street and Barbara Avenue (east of Town Center and Beach Road, near Mount Carmel Catholic Church). For more information, call 322-6158. ***(PR)***

Marshalls get $1.5M to stem outbreak of mutli-drug resistant tuberculosis

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Tony Babauta, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Areas, signed yesterday a $1,456,932 grant that will be used to combat an outbreak of multiple drug resistant tuberculosis in the Marshall Islands.

"This disease needs to be stopped in its tracks for the health of the Marshallese people," said Babauta. "If left unchecked it would burden the community not just with expensive medical care but with lives lost prematurely."

Babauta pointed out that this is not the first occurrence of drug resistant TB in the Freely Associated States.

"I am increasingly concerned that given the free migration privileges of FAS citizens to the U.S., outbreaks such as this demands quick and immediate action by FAS leaders, the federal government and U.S. jurisdictions most visited by FAS citizens," he said. "Containment and cure should be our priority to ensure that FAS and U.S. citizens are protected. In the recent past there has been a similar outbreak in the Federated States of Micronesia and I anticipate that the lessons learned will provide an excellent model for the Marshalls to follow and provide a similar outcome of success."

In 2008, an outbreak of drug resistant TB occurred in FSM. The U.S. government through the Department of the Interior, at that time, provided similar assistance to stem the spread of the disease.

The collaboration among FSM leadership, the U.S. government, and regional leaders resulted in the Centers for Disease Control Division of Tuberculosis Elimination presenting special awards to Dr. Dorina Fred of Chuuk State and Dr. Richard Brostrom of the CNMI who, through collaboration and extreme competence, managed, and took control of the MDRTB outbreak in Chuuk, preventing loss of life. ***(DOI)***

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NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy Inos, through the Coastal Resources Management Office (CRMO), hereby give notice that a CRM Agency Officials meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 09, 2010, at 9:30 A.M. at the CRM conference room, 1st floor Morgen Building, Oleai, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
a) Call to Order
b) Roll Call

II. OTHER MATTERS
1. Tinian Municipal Landfill
– CRM Reference No. TMS-2009-X-080
a. Permit status determination

III. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. [Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the CRM Agency Officials may vote to meet in executive session.]

/s/ JOHN B. JOYNER, Ph.D.
Director

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COMMONWEALTH BOARD OF NURSE EXAMINERS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law, Section 11, the Commonwealth Board Of Nurse Examiners Board of Directors, is hereby giving notice that the Board will be meeting on Wednesday, Friday 10-12, 2010. The meeting will be held at the CE Room, Commonwealth Health Center, Saipan, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters –
A. Roll Call
II. Call to Order
III. Adoption of Minutes –
A. July 30-31, 2009
IV. Adoption of Agenda
V. Election of Officers
VI. Unfinished Business –
1. Rules and Regulation (Review from Legal Counsel)
VII. New Business –
2. Site Visit (University of Loyola at CNMI and Emmanuel College)
3. Review of Nursing Programs.
4. Discussion of Nursing Academy
5. Review of New Applications for NCLEX exam.
6. Miscellaneous
VIII. Adjournment

/s/ Bertha P. Camacho, NP
Chairperson

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Time to burst Beijing's bubble

In its first year, the Obama administration went out of its way to cater to China's communist leadership. It publicly put human rights concerns on a back burner, delayed a presidential meeting with the Dalai Lama and did not press Beijing hard about its currency manipulation. Now it appears that effort produced the opposite of the intended effect. Rather than respond with its own gestures of cooperation, Beijing is pressing hard for more American concessions. Bursting with hubris about its emergence as a global power, it is testing to see how far a new and inexperienced U.S. president can be pushed.

That explains China's aggressive response to the administration's announcement last week of a $6 billion arms sale to Taiwan; its dire-sounding warnings about the consequences of an expected meeting between President Obama and the Dalai Lama this month; and its public resistance to a U.S. effort to impose new sanctions on Iran. It's essential that Mr. Obama calmly but firmly reject the pressure.

The Taiwan arms sale that prompted Beijing's latest eruption is an example not of U.S. provocation but of the Obama administration fulfilling an obligation as unobtrusively as possible. The sale was agreed to years ago by the administration of President George W. Bush; supplying Taiwan with arms is mandated by a 30-year-old act of Congress. To abandon the deal would signal the forfeiture of U.S. security leadership in Asia. So the administration went forward with the sale—but it withheld the weapon most desired by Taipei, and opposed by Beijing: F-16 warplanes. It made sure China knew the announcement was coming.

Part of China's reaction—heated rhetoric and the suspension of some military contacts—was in line with its response to past arms sales to Taiwan. But Beijing also threatened to impose sanctions on U.S. companies that supply the weapons, something it has not done openly in the past. Steps against Boeing, which supplies a naval missile to Taiwan and commercial aircraft to China, would cause a major escalation in trade tensions.

At the moment, Mr. Obama's most active diplomatic initiative is the effort to win U.N. Security Council approval for tough sanctions against Iran, something that will require China's cooperation. The administration also hopes President Hu Jintao will attend a disarmament conference in Washington in April that is one of Mr. Obama's signature initiatives. It may be tempted to believe that more conciliatory gestures—another postponement of the Dalai Lama, or a slacking of support for Google's challenge to Chinese censorship of the Internet—may unlock China's cooperation.

That would be a mistake. Instead Mr. Obama should forthrightly support the cause of human rights in Tibet, and he should allow China to face potential isolation on Iran. The administration rightly says it hopes to cooperate on issues of mutual interest while not shrinking from differences. That, in fact, is the status quo that Mr. Obama inherited. Reinforcing it might require Mr. Obama to prick the bubble of inflated ambition that has been growing in Beijing.

(c) 2010, The Washington Post

Give nurses a bigger role in improving health care

By RISA LAVIZZO-MOUREY
Kaiser Health News

Risa Lavizzo-Mourey is president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She wrote this for Kaiser Health News*, an editorially independent news service that is a program of the Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonpartisan health-care policy-research organization that isn't affiliated with Kaiser Permanente.*

Skilled health provider. Sympathetic caregiver. Trusted dispenser of medicines. Capable interpreter of complicated medical instructions. Coordinator of care. Triage expert.

All those phrases describe the roles nurses play in our health-care system, but it's just a part of the story. Nurses also are uniquely positioned to help reduce medical errors, increase access to health care, manage and improve care coordination, identify ways to contain costs and much more.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has been investing in nurses for decades. As a foundation with a mission to improve the nation's health and health care, we have long recognized that nurses are integral to effective reform. The public agrees. Poll after poll finds that nurses are either the most trusted group of professionals, or one of the most trusted groups, in the country.

But at this critical moment, with the nation poised for the most significant health reform in generations, we wanted to see what opinion leaders—from academia, business, the health industry and elsewhere—think about the roles nurses should play as we strive to reform our country's health care system. So we partnered with Gallup to conduct an opinion leader survey. It found that, across the board, opinion leaders say that our country is not taking advantage of all that nurses have to offer in terms of leadership, innovation and reform.

We aren't fully utilizing the skills and talents that nurses offer—and that's a waste of a valuable resource.

In the survey, opinion leaders ranked nurses behind six other stakeholders when it comes to who they expect will influence health reform over the next five to 10 years. Seventy-five percent said government officials will have a great deal of influence in health reform in the next five to 10 years, compared to 56 percent for insurance executives, 46 percent for pharmaceutical executives, 46 percent for health-care executives, 37 percent for doctors, 20 percent for patients—and just 14 percent for nurses.

But that's not what they want to see. Large majorities of opinion leaders said they would like to see nurses have more influence in a number of key areas, including reducing medical errors and improving patient safety (90 percent); improving quality of care (89 percent); promoting wellness and expanding preventive care (86 percent); improving health care efficiency and reducing costs (84 percent); coordinating care through the health care system (83 percent); helping the health care system adapt to an aging population (83 percent); and increasing access to health care (74 percent).

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has been investing in nurses for decades. As a foundation with a mission to improve the nation's health and health care, we have long recognized that nurses are integral to effective reform. The public agrees. Poll after poll finds that nurses are either the most trusted group of professionals, or one of the most trusted groups, in the country.

So why don't nurses have more influence? These opinion leaders identified as major barriers to increased influence that nurses are not perceived as important decision makers or revenue generators, especially when compared to doctors. These barriers cost us a lot. They prevent the best ideas from being implemented and sometimes even heard. They prevent the best policies from being developed and refined. And ultimately, they prevent the best care from being delivered to patients.

It's time for change. And in this survey, opinion leaders said so. A strong majority said that nurses should have more influence than they do now on health policy, planning and management. They want the barriers removed, and they want nurses themselves to step up.

So let's pay attention. Let's learn from this survey and remove the barriers that prevent nurses from taking leadership positions more often, and that prevent our health care system from benefiting fully from their knowledge, wisdom and expertise.

I am convinced that successful reform must enlist nurses as skilled health providers advisors, caregivers, dispensers of medicine, interpreters of complicated medical instructions, care coordinators, triage leaders—and also as experts, thinkers, planners, advocates, reformers, board members and catalysts for change. At this moment, when we are challenged to muster all our resources to make our health-care system work better and as it should, the full engagement of the nursing profession is exactly what we need.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

5 myths about credit card debt

By ROBERT D. MANNING
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

They're yuppie food stamps. They give new meaning to the question "paper or plastic?" And they're in everyone's wallet. Americans have nearly 700 million all-purpose bank credit cards, plus nearly 500 million retail store cards—and they have transformed how we live and consume. Today, Americans are more dependent on credit than savings, a radical departure from the last major economic crisis, in the 1930s. Congress' effort to change that, the Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility and Disclosure Act signed by President Obama last spring, will go into effect in a few weeks. But it won't fix everything. Or maybe not much of anything. Here are the myths that muddle our understanding of how we've racked up so much credit card debt.

1 Middle-class American families have long depended on bank credit cards to manage their budgets.

Not true. Consumer credit originated with local merchants that offered "open book" credit to cement customer loyalty and increase sales. As major retail chains and malls replaced small shopkeepers in the 1950s and '60s, stores such as Sears and Montgomery Ward issued credit cards for the same reasons. But if you didn't like what Sears had to offer, you couldn't use its credit card anywhere else.

Universal or bank cards such as Visa or MasterCard were reserved for high- and upper-middle-income households. They were offered to reward the banks' best customers (after all, how many toasters could they use?) and served as loss leaders, as most cardholders paid off their monthly balances. Until the early 1980s, bank credit cards were a symbol of high social status, used mainly for convenience rather than because of need. This was the inspiration for the color-coded cards that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s: Fiscally responsible "convenience" users wanted to be distinguished from less credit-worthy consumers with a platinum card.

2 More people have credit cards because companies got better at managing risk and began marketing to lower-income customers.

Mostly no. Credit card use expanded dramatically during the golden age of the industry—beginning in the early 1980s—because deregulation suddenly allowed high interest rates and penalty fees, and credit cards became a major engine of bank profits. In 1978, a Supreme Court decision effectively ended consumer interest-rate limits and the federal usury law. After the 1981-82 recession, industrial restructuring shifted demand for bank loans from manufacturing companies to individual households, and national banks aggressively pushed for more deregulatory policies, in line with the '78 decision. A 1996 Supreme Court ruling that ended state-regulated limits on credit card fees furthered that cause. Today, only nonprofit credit unions, as mandated by Congress, must abide by an interest rate ceiling of 15 percent.

As more and more people were preapproved for credit cards in the '80s and '90s, the "free" credit used by the most affluent households was subsidized by the high interest rates and penalty fees paid by the most financially distressed. A carefully guarded secret of the industry is that about a quarter of cardholders have accounted for almost two-thirds of interest and penalty-fee revenues. Nearly half of all credit card accounts do not generate finance and fee revenues.

3 Responsible cardholders will have to pay more to make up for the defaults of irresponsible consumers.

False. Although credit card companies are experiencing record default rates, irresponsible consumer borrowing is not the main culprit behind soaring interest rates and fees. Banks have suffered far more from mortgage foreclosures and home-equity loan defaults. Major banks encouraged their credit card divisions to relax their standards at the end of the financial bubble; more customers went deeper into credit card debt. Those customers were encouraged to refinance their mortgages, generating high fees for the banks. Banks then sold securities backed by credit card debt to institutional investors around the world. When the bubble burst in September 2008, banks could not sell these low-quality securities. They were stuck with poorly performing credit card portfolios.

For cardholders, the central problem is that the credit card industry's business model is fundamentally flawed; bankers want consumers to foot the bill for its reengineering through higher interest rates and fees. As deregulation gave rise to conglomerate financial institutions, credit cards continued to serve as marketing loss leaders for attracting higher-income cardholders (who typically paid off their monthly charges) by bundling them with other financial products such as loans, brokerage fees and insurance. With the recession, these other bank revenues have declined sharply, raising pressure on credit card companies to boost profits.

4 The credit card industry is so competitive that regulation is unnecessary.

Rather than a self-regulating and intensely competitive market of more than 5,000 issuers, the credit card industry is one of the most concentrated in the nation (and is increasingly being hit with allegations of monopoly practices). The top three issuers—Bank of America, Citibank and Chase—control more than 60 percent of outstanding credit card debt. Consumer choice has declined over the past 20 years as economies of scale for marketing, administration and customer service have led thousands of card issuers to cash out to the largest banks. And self-regulation has failed when it comes to weeding out the worst card issuers; Visa and MasterCard have dismal track records in disciplining their members.

5 The CARD Act finally protects consumers against the credit card industry's most abusive practices.

Yes and no. Although touted by the Obama administration as a major consumer achievement, the long-awaited CARD Act, which goes into effect Feb. 22, offers a mix of overdue protections and surprising omissions.

Some of the worst industry practices are prohibited, including billing systems that generate finance charges on paid-off balances, some retroactive interest-rate increases and unrestricted marketing to consumers under the age of 21 who don't have an independent source of income.

On the negative side, Congress stipulated a nine-month phase-in period for these regulations. For millions of Americans, especially those suffering from employment and income interruptions, this is too late. If you're in debt today, this bill doesn't help you. Companies already have jacked up interest rates, sharply reduced lines of credit, increased service fees and diluted the value of loyalty reward programs. These trends have brought consumer credit scores down, triggering higher borrowing costs and greater difficulty finding work.

But there is a silver lining to falling credit scores and fewer preapprovals for cards: More people are learning that when it comes to plastic, you can leave home without it.

Robert D. Manning is the author of Credit Card Nation *and* Living With Debt. *He was the editorial adviser to the 2007 documentary* In Debt We Trust *and is the founder of the Responsible Debt Relief Institute. rmanning555@gmail.com.*

Letter to the Editor

Thinking outside the box

PSS forging a partnership with the retirement association is the most progressive human resources best practice it has ever undertaken. This means that in the CNMI there is no shortage of teachers. PSS should continue to probe the base of qualified and capable intelligent professionals in the CNMI to cover the gap for good classroom instructions and lifelong learning for our students. This uncommon sense undertaking will be an investment capable of solving the teacher shortage that continue to linger in the minds of those holding key positions in PSS. I am pleased that finally this source of teaching capacity is finally turning to be the answer to the teacher shortage and the mindset practiced in PSS.

It will take innovative and creative approaches to solve human resource problems. This will require breaking stagnant mindset and searching for pragmatic solutions. The problem is that this idea should have been implemented many years ago. Teacher certification could be attained by establishing formal connections with colleges and universities. PSS should engage in proactive work to find venues and accredited colleges and universities that would produce qualified teachers. Finding and building capacity for teaching should be harvested from external sources. More candidates are available from external sources than what is available internally. PSS should fill its teacher needs by tapping experienced professionals who want to contribute to education in the CNMI. The need is not just for filling the gap to substitute teaching, but should spread over all teacher needs in all areas of the educational system. There are always good results if we bring our thinking outside our defined boxes.

Francisco R. Agulto
Chalan Kanoa, Saipan

Kill your favorite subsidy to win deficit war

By DAVID PAULY
(C) 2010, BLOOMBERG NEWS

The Deficit. The Debt. Americans are strangling themselves economically. So:

1) Restore all income taxes to the pre-President George W. Bush level, not just those for people earning $250,000 or more.

2) Tax the banks $90 billion as proposed by President Barack Obama to pay for their bailout. Then break them up—making them small enough to fail and eliminating the need for more trillion-dollar rescues.

You will find these measures repellant, of course, if you're happy with the estimated $1.6 trillion U.S. budget deficit for the year ending Sept. 30.

Since excessive government encouragement of home ownership contributed to the subprime mortgage crisis:

3) Eliminate income-tax deductions for property taxes and mortgage interest. Phase it in over five years so it hurts less.

4) Break Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac into four mortgage- buying companies and get them off the federal dole.

You'll be against these moves, naturally, if you think we can easily afford a budget deficit of $1.3 trillion in fiscal 2011.

Because we need curbs now on out-of-control entitlements:

5) Raise the retirement age for collecting full Social Security benefits to 72. Cut cost-of-living increases for beneficiaries to half the inflation rate for 10 years.

The president said the other night that fixing Social Security was easy. Let's prove it.

6) Raise the age for Medicare eligibility to 68. Try the Obama health-care changes. What's there to lose? Extended coverage might lead to more preventive medicine that saves money in the long run.

You won't want to do any of this, certainly, if you're delighted that the national debt now stands at $12.3 trillion, compared with $900 billion 30 years ago.

There's money to be saved on diverse fronts:

7) End the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on the current schedules. Not levying a war tax to pay for these conflicts—which Americans initially would have supported—was a blunder.

8) Kill farm subsidies. It's true that nature can damage farmers. It's also true that in another industry, a rival's new product can ruin a company.

There are other possibilities. We could start a national sales tax—with rebates for those with low incomes. We can tax excessive health-insurance benefits. Personally, I would like a special income tax on college presidents who make more than half a million and college teachers who don't teach.

New taxes won't appeal to you if you're looking forward to annual budget deficits of $700 billion to $1 trillion for the next 10 years.

Finally:

9) Reduce government.

Without denigrating what these folks do, can we ask if the president really needs both a Council of Economic Advisers and a National Economic Council?

Government housing officials will have less to do if we cut Fannie and Freddie loose.

Whole agencies might be suspect. We, for instance, have a Selective Service System but no draft.

The government has both the U.S. Postal Service and the Postal Regulatory Commission. Doesn't competition from e-mail and FedEx keep postal rates in line?

Did you know that we also have a Merit Systems Protection Board? Its Web site says one of its jobs is to make sure government workers are qualified.

Of course, you will have no problem with these government entities if you're not worried about the national debt increasing to an estimated $18.5 trillion by 2020.

But the noose is getting tighter.

David Pauly is a Bloomberg News columnist.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers in the morning, then scattered showers in the afternoon. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.
▲85° ▼75°	▲84° ▼75°	▲84° ▼74°	▲85° ▼75°	▲85° ▼75°

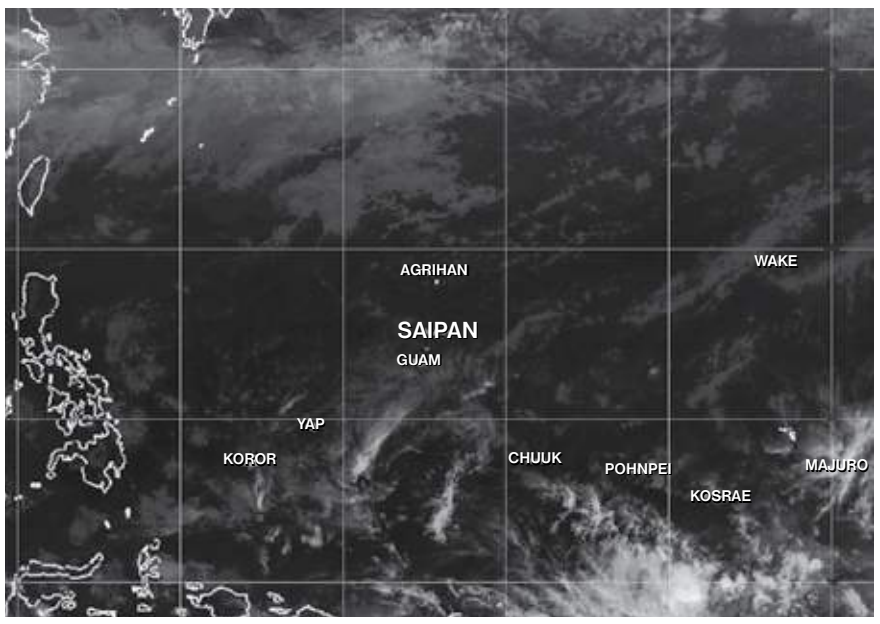
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Sunny	▲84	▼74
Palau	Showers	▲89	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲85	▼76
Chuuk	Cloudy	▲90	▼79
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲86	▼74
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲86	▼73
Majuro	Cloudy	▲84	▼74

Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Sunny	▲73	▼60
Beijing	Snow	▲28	▼27
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	▲75	▼69
Honolulu	Showers	▲78	▼67
London	Cloudy	▲52	▼37
Los Angeles	Rain	▲62	▼48
Manila	Sunny	▲89	▼72
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲77	▼58
Miami	Showers	▲79	▼54
New York	Snow	▲28	▼20
Osaka	Snow	▲41	▼31
Paris	Dreary	▲45	▼32
Pusan	Sunny	▲46	▼30
Rome	Rain	▲52	▼33
Salem	Showers	▲49	▼34
San Francisco	Rain	▲56	▼45
Seoul	Sunny	▲34	▼21
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲45	▼28
Washington, DC	Snow	▲30	▼21

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2010
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A weak circulation is near 25N138E with cloudiness and patchy rain north of a line from 23N130E to 21N139E to 23N150E. A remnant shear line extends northeastward from near Yap at 10N140E to just south of Guam at 11N145E to just south of Wake Island at 18N167E then continues as a cold front to beyond 25N180. Scattered to broken clouds and patchy rain are along and up to 150 miles northwest of the shear line while overcast clouds and scattered showers are along and up to 125 miles northwest of the cold front. Trade-wind convergence is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms along the equator west of Tarawa in an area to the south of 3N from 157E to 174E. This area is south of Pohnpei and Kosrae.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

1:48 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
6:45 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
12:29 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
8:17 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45 AM	6:17 PM
Sunday	6:45 AM	6:18 PM
Monday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM
Tuesday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM
Wednesday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:09 AM	11:44 AM
Sunday	1:05 AM	12:33 PM
Monday	2:00 AM	1:24 PM
Tuesday	2:53 AM	2:16 PM
Wednesday	3:43 AM	3:08 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 28, 2010

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT
NW638	8:00am	10:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily
NW289	5:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

CA8282	3:15am	7:00am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 4, 5, 7 via PUS
C09603/893	3:15pm	9:10pm	3, 5 via GUM-PALAU
OZ606/715	3:20pm	11:30pm	7 via ICN
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:35am+1	Daily via NRT effective Jan 25
NW277	8:30pm	1:00am+1	3, 6
NW639	9:00pm	1:35am+1	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW290	10:00am	2:35pm	Daily
NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	9:00pm	1:35am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

CA8281	6:40pm	1:55am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4, 6 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0892/9596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	3,5 via PALAU-GUM
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2 ,4 ,6, 7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2, 4 ,6 ,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CA: China Airlines; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday
9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship
Wednesday
7pm worship
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon English service, Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Feb. 6, 2000

CHC pays GHLIP debts to 2 Hawaii hospitals

The Commonwealth Health Center's Medical Referral Office settled on behalf of the Group Health and Life Insurance more than $1.1 million debts, incurred by its subscribers' off-island medical treatments, to two Hawaii-based hospitals. GHLIP Manager Dolores Moore disclosed Medical Referral Office paid Straub Clinic and Hospital at least $443,958.86 and Queen's Medical Center with $773,212.03. The group health will settle the amount with the Medical Referral Office through staggered payment as GHLI subscribers remit their monthly contribution to the program.

OPA drops protest vs. Enron on 60MW plant

The Office of Public Auditor yesterday dismissed protest-appeals filed by three companies against the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation's decision to award the controversial Saipan power plant project to Enron International Mariana Power Inc.
In a six-page decision on the protest-appeals made by Saipan Power Partners, Tomen Consortium, and Telesource CNMI Inc, Public Auditor Mike S. Sablan said OPA lacks the jurisdiction to review nor to proceed with the investigation of the case.
Mr. Sablan explained the auditing function of the OPA provided for under the Article III Section 12 of the CNMI Constitution described its responsibility as an independent examination of books, performance, records and other evidence relating to use of funds by any agency.

Feb. 6, 2002

New tax on poker machines mulled

The Tinian Legislative Delegation is now planning to levy an additional $2,000 local tax on poker machines on Tinian as a means to fund two projects on the island. Senate Fiscal Affairs Chair Sen. Jose M. Dela Cruz yesterday said the Tinian delegation is considering the passage of a local law that would assess an additional $2,000 local tax on poker machines, except on the ones inside the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino. "We will be implementing this because we have two projects coming up. We want to allocate that money for these projects," Dela Cruz said.

Babauta submits 17 names to OPM

Besides the high-profile appointments of special assistants and the Attorney General, Gov. Juan N. Babauta has also begun appointing administrative personnel and key advisers who would comprise his inner circle. Administration officials said that Babauta has submitted a list of 17 names to the Office of Personnel Management, in a January 30 memorandum that made the employees' start-work date retroactive to January 14, 2002. "The employment papers of these employees...are still undergoing administrative review. It is necessary that these employees be allowed to start work date on January 14, 2002, in order to avoid disruption of essential public services," said Babauta.

Feb. 6, 2003

NMC mulls Nauru Bldg expansion

The Northern Marianas College is looking at the possibility of acquiring the Nauru building as part of the college's expansion program. "We're looking at various options in our efforts to acquire new facilities. One is the possible use of the Nauru building," NMC president Kenneth Wright said yesterday. Wright, who was guest speaker at yesterday's Saipan Chamber of Commerce meeting, said the expansion of the NMC-the CNMI's only community college-must start now or nothing can ever be done. "There's a window of opportunities. We have to decide, and we have to decide now. We have to be doing something in the next three to four months," said Wright.

Senators push for hiring of CIP managers

Frustrated over the turtle-paced movement of public construction projects, Senate President Paul A. Manglona expressed support to moves by the administration to hire contractual managers who will oversee the long list of Capital Improvement Projects pending throughout the CNMI. In justifying his support to new hires, Manglona called attention to the millions of CIP money that has already been made available for the undertaking. "Funding for numerous projects has been appropriated and budgeted on the islands of Tinian and Rota, yet many of these projects still remain pending. In addition to these are many other ongoing projects that require constant follow up," the Rota senator said in a November 2002 letter to the Governor's CIP advisor, Chuck D. Jordan.

Business

Job losses seen to get worse

WASHINGTON (AP)—Job losses during the Great Recession have been huge and they're about to get bigger.

When the Labor Department releases the January unemployment report Friday, it will also update its estimate of jobs lost in the year that ended in March 2009. The number is expected to rise by roughly 800,000, raising the number of jobs shed during the recession to around 8 million.

The new data will help illustrate the scope of the jobs crisis. Analysts think the economy might generate 1 million to 2 million jobs this year. And they say it will take at least three to four years for the job market to return to anything like normal.

"It's going to take a long time to dig out of this hole," said Julia Coronado, senior U.S. economist at BNP Paribas.

Wall Street economists expect the January report will show a tiny increase of 5,000 jobs. That would be only the second monthly gain since the recession began. But it probably wouldn't be enough to hold down the unemployment rate, which is forecast to rise to 10.1 percent. That would match October's 26-year high. And it would be the fourth-straight month of double-digit joblessness.

The Labor Department's revisions on employment levels are done every year. They are based on unemployment insurance tax data that companies submit to states.

Jobs remain scarce even as the economy is recovering: Gross domestic product, the broadest measure of the nation's output, has risen for two straight quarters. GDP rose by 5.7 percent in the October-December quarter, the fastest pace in six years.

But hiring is still lagging. Many economists say businesses are reluctant to add workers because it's not clear whether the recovery will continue once government stimulus measures, such as tax credits for home buyers, end.

The debate over health care reform and the scheduled expiration of some Bush administration tax cuts at the end of this year may also cause companies to restrain hiring, many economists said.

"Until some of these uncertainties from Washington get cleared up, businesses, particularly small businesses, are going to be loath to do any additional hiring," said Hank Smith, chief investment officer at Haverford Investments.

High unemployment is likely to hold back consumer spending, which has led most recoveries in the past. That's why many economists think the current rebound will be weak.

Toyota woes mount as gov't opens probe on Prius brakes

WASHINGTON (AP)—Toyota faced mounting pressure Thursday as the government opened a probe of brake problems with the Prius, a crown jewel of its lineup. The beleaguered automaker said it was "too soon" to decide whether to add the hybrid to the millions of cars it has recalled.

Some owners of the 2010 Prius have reported their brakes do not always engage immediately when they press the brake pedal, or that the brakes have an inconsistent feel. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said it would assess the scope of the problem and the safety risk to about 37,000 cars that could be affected.

The investigation comes as safety questions surround Toyota, which has already issued broad recalls for millions of its best-selling vehicles, including the Corolla and Camry, because of gas pedals that can become stuck.

U.S. officials have blessed Toyota's solution to that problem, a small piece of steel designed to eliminate excess friction in the pedal mechanism, but have criticized Toyota for being too slow in responding to customer complaints.

Asked whether Toyota would recall the 2010 Prius, spokesman Brian Lyons said: "It's too soon to call at this point. We will, of course, fully cooperate with NHTSA in that investigation."

Lyons also said Toyota is checking other hybrid models in its lineup to see if they have the same braking system as the 2010 model, but said he was so far unaware of any other models being involved.

Congressional investigators expanded their review of Toyota to include the Prius as California Rep. Darrell Issa, the ranking Republican on the House Oversight Committee, asked Toyota for records on its Prius brakes.

The committee plans a hearing next week on Toyota's recalls, the first of two in Congress this month. Issa said he would focus on whether Toyota or NHTSA failed to properly deal with safety complaints or address them quickly enough.

"We think they should have acted more aggressively or quickly," said Issa, who owns four Priuses, none of which fall under the investigation.

Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal said he and attorneys general in other states may take legal action against Toyota over possible deceptive claims to consumers about the safety of the company's cars.

Nation

Law official: Airline bomb suspect flips on cleric

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Nigerian suspect in a failed Christmas Day airliner bombing turned against the cleric who claims to be his teacher and has helped the U.S. hunt for the radical preacher, a law enforcement official said Thursday.

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the 23-year-old Nigerian who faces terrorism charges in the Christmas bombing, has been cooperating with the FBI for days, providing information about his contacts in Yemen and the al-Qaida affiliate that operates there.

His cooperation talking about U.S.-born Yemeni radical Anwar al-Awlaki is significant because it could provide fresh clues for authorities trying to capture or kill him in the remote mountains of Yemen. Al-Awlaki has emerged as a prominent al-Qaida recruiter and has been tied to the 9/11 hijackers, Abdulmutallab and the suspect in November's deadly shooting rampage at Fort Hood, Texas.

Abdulmutallab

The law enforcement official would not say what information Abdulmutallab provided, but al-Awlaki himself said in a recent interview that he and Abdulmutallab had kept in contact. A senior U.S. intelligence official said al-Awlaki represented the biggest name on the list of people Abdulmutallab might have information against. Both spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive ongoing investigation.

Abdulmutallab's cooperation with U.S. authorities is at the center of a political dispute in Washington. Democrats say it proves the Obama administration was correct to handle the case as a criminal matter. Republicans accuse the administration of leaking details for political purposes.

Abdulmutallab agreed to cooperate after FBI agents flew to Nigeria and returned to the U.S. with Abdulmutallab's family members. In a federal prison outside Detroit, Abdulmutallab's father and uncle persuaded him to cooperate with the FBI, according to a U.S. official briefed on the talks who also spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing case.

A month before the attack, Abdulmutallab's father warned the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria that his son might be dangerous, a warning that officials failed to connect to other evidence that intelligence officials had gathered. President Barack Obama has said the U.S. had enough information to prevent the attack.

Al-Awlaki, who once preached in mosques in California and northern Virginia and posted fiery English-language Internet sermons urging Muslims to fight in jihad, said in an interview released Thursday that he taught the Christmas bomber and supported his efforts but did not call for the attack.

Major snowstorm heads for the mid-Atlantic region

AP

The North Grounds of the White House in Washington , Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2010.

RICHMOND, Va. (AP)—A storm expected to dump up to 2 feet of snow in parts of the Mid-Atlantic, including Washington, D.C., was already pelting the Southeast with heavy rain Thursday.

Virginia's General Assembly canceled Friday's floor sessions and committee meetings, the first time anyone could remember that the threat of snow had sent the whole legislature home. Officials urged people to stock up on supplies Thursday night and warned of a tough evening commute Friday.

Those who can should work from home, said Joan Morris, a spokeswoman for the Virginia Department of Transportation.

"This is not a good mix," Morris said. "Heavy, wet snow with gusting winds is going to make it a very tough storm for us. I expect visibility will be very poor in spots, and we'll have to deal with drifting snow."

The Coast Guard warned mariners from Virginia to New York that the storm could produce gale-force winds and high seas.

Flood watches were posted from southern Louisiana to the Florida Panhandle and much of Georgia into Friday evening.

The National Weather Service said the rain would turn to snow as the storm moves up the Atlantic seaboard. It issued a warning stretching from Baltimore to northern Virginia and parts of West Virginia.

Total accumulations of 16 inches to 24 inches are expected. The Richmond area, which averages about a foot of snow a season, was still shoveling out from a storm last weekend that left nearly that much. Many area schools had just reopened Thursday.

The weather service warns that the mix of heavy snow and strong winds would make travel Friday night "very hazardous or nearly impossible."

Virginia Del. Tim Hugo was hurrying out of a Thursday afternoon committee meeting so he could head home to Fairfax County, a Washington suburb that's supposed to get hit.

"I'm heading out of here now because I don't want my wife stranded at home with 2 feet of snow in the drive," he said.

State officials were deploying thousands of trucks and employees and had hundreds of thousands of tons of salt at the ready.

DNA evidence exonerates NY man of 1976 rape

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP)—A mentally ill New York man who spent nearly six years behind bars for a 1976 rape he insisted he didn't commit was exonerated Thursday after DNA testing showed he was innocent.

The conviction of Freddie Peacock of Rochester, now 60, was based on a false confession police attributed to him just hours after the early morning rape of a 24-year-old woman who lived in the same apartment building.

State Judge David Egan vacated the conviction after lawyers for Peacock and Monroe County prosecutors agreed DNA evidence obtained from the victim's underwear and from Peacock in 2008 proved he wasn't the rapist.

During the brief proceeding, Peacock sat expressionless in the courtroom. He declined to talk afterward to reporters. But his elder sister cried when the judge threw out the conviction.

"It's been a long time coming," said Edith Leonard. "He talked about it all the time, just wouldn't let it go. He kept writing letters (and) finally found somebody to come to his rescue. I'm just happy today because it took a lot out of our family."

Convicted in December 1976, Peacock drew a 20-year prison sentence. He was released on parole in May 1982. He contacted the Innocence Project in 2002 and the New York City organization agreed to take his case.

Peacock has suffered from unspecified psychiatric problems since his teens. Olga Akselrod, an attorney for the Innocence Project, said he suffers from "a serious mental illness that is quite debilitating." She declined to be more specific. Peacock spends much of his time working as a volunteer at a church.

Brown sworn in as US senator from Massachusetts

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republican Scott Brown took over the seat of the late Massachusetts Sen. Edward Kennedy on Thursday, vowing to be an independent voice in a bitterly divided Senate.

"I can't promise I will be right in every vote I make. ... I will do the very best job I can," Brown told reporters.

Brown was sworn-in by Vice President Joe Biden at a Capitol Hill ceremony a week earlier than he originally planned, and just in time to plunge into a partisan fight over President Barack Obama's choice of a union attorney for a top labor job.

Brown's arrival in the Senate ends the Democrats' supermajority and gives the GOP 41 votes they can use to block President Barack Obama's agenda.

At a news conference, Brown made an assertion about the last economic stimulus bill that most economists would dispute.

"The last stimulus bill didn't create one new job," Brown said in response to a question about a jobs bill pending in the Senate. He added that the stimulus may have retained some jobs.

Republicans have questioned the way the Obama administration has counted jobs created or saved with stimulus money. But most economists believe new jobs were created even though unemployment rates rose.

Depending on how Democrats set the Senate's calendar, Brown's first vote could be against the confirmation of Craig Becker, a lawyer for the Service Employees International Union, to a seat on the National Labor Relations Board, the federal panel that referees private sector labor-management disputes.

ACROSS THE NATION

Records: Palin cabins not noted in tax assessments

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—Records show that Sarah Palin hasn't paid any property taxes on cabins that have been built on two backcountry plots partially owned by the former Alaska governor. There are no tax assessments for the two-story, house-sized cabins, a workshop and a sauna spotted Thursday in an aerial survey. Property taxes totaling $156.13 were paid on the land in 2009—but that bill did not include anything for the structures because the local assessor didn't know about the new construction nearly 100 miles north of Anchorage. The issue has attracted the attention of local tax officials who conducted the scheduled aerial survey of properties in the area on Thursday. The area is accessible only by floatplane, snowmobile or four-wheeler.

Asylum hearing for Obama aunt ends with no ruling

BOSTON (AP)—An immigration hearing for President Barack Obama's African aunt ended Thursday without an immediate decision in her second bid for asylum in the United States. Kenya native Zeituni Onyango did not comment after testifying for about 2 1/2 hours Thursday at the closed proceedings in U.S. Immigration Court. "The hearing went well. She was very honest. She was very to the point," her lawyer, Margaret Wong, said afterward. Wong said Onyango is hopeful the judge will rule in her favor because "she really wants to stay in America." Two doctors also testified in support of the case her lawyer said includes medical reasons to stay in the U.S. Wong declined afterward to discuss specifics before a judge's decision.

Man is killed in shark attack in Florida

STUART, Fla. (AP)—There was blood in the water, the sharks were circling and a grievously hurt Stephen Schafer—his thigh gashed and his hand mauled—was screaming in pain by the time the lifeguard reached him. The lifeguard pulled Schafer onto his rescue board, but his cries quieted as he drifted in and out of consciousness. He would soon be dead, marking the first deadly shark attack in Florida in five years, and perhaps a rare instance of a lethal attack by a swarm of sharks. Schafer, 38, was attacked Wednesday afternoon a quarter-mile off South Florida's Atlantic Coast while he was out kiteboarding—using a large kite-like sail to pull him along the surface on a board strapped to his feet. When the winds lightened and his sail dropped, the Stuart man found himself in the water, surrounded by sharks.

Asia

India offers to resume stalled TALKS WITH PAKISTAN

NEW DELHI (AP)—India offered Thursday to resume high-level peace talks with Pakistan, an overture that reflected a significant warming between the nuclear-armed countries one year after the deadly siege on Mumbai The United States has been pressuring both countries to resume talks, which would free up Islamabad to concentrate on its fight against the Taliban militants—a key to U.S. strategy in Afghanistan.

India, which blamed the 2008 attacks on Pakistan-based militants, made the offer despite the country's continued insistence that Pakistan has not done enough to rein in Muslim extremists operating in its territory.

Pakistan has been seeking a resumption of the talks for months, but stopped short of accepting the offer.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi called it a "positive step." He noted the talks should resume from where they had been put on hold by India after the Mumbai attacks—a clear reference that Pakistan wants a return to the wide-ranging dialogue the two nations had been holding.

It remained unclear, though, if India would go that far. That dialogue, which covers a broad range of issues and had been intended to lead toward a full normalization of relations, remains a sensitive issue in New Delhi because of continuing suspicions about Islamabad's resolve against terror groups.

However, a serious thaw in India-Pakistan relations could send strategic ripples across the troubled region, with Islamabad shifting its attention away from the border with India and instead focusing—as Washington wants—on its increasingly bloody war with Taliban militants.

P.J. Crowley, spokesman for the State Department, said the U.S. is encouraging dialogue among India, Pakistan and Afghanistan as way to achieve stability.

"We certainly have been encouraging steps that both Pakistan and India could take....," he said, adding the goal was "a more stable region that is focused on both interests that they share and threats that they share."

NKorea says it will free detained US missionary

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea announced Friday that it will free an American missionary detained on Christmas Day for illegally crossing the border from China.

Robert Park, of Tucson, Arizona, slipped across the frozen Tumen River into the North carrying letters calling on North Korean leader Kim Jong Il to close the country's notoriously brutal prison camps and to step down from power, rights activists in Seoul said.

North Korean media reported in a brief dispatch Dec. 29 that authorities had detained an American suspected of illegal entry, but said nothing more about it until Friday, leaving his fate in question for weeks.

The 28-year-old missionary's detainment came nearly four months after two other Americans, journalists Euna Park and Laura Ling, were released with former President Bill Clinton's help after they were arrested at the border and sentenced to prison.

Late last month, North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency reported the arrest of another American suspected of illegal entry. He has not been identified.

State media in Pyongyang said Friday that North Korea "decided to leniently forgive and release" Park after "taking his admission and sincere repentance of his wrongdoings into consideration."

No further details about Park's release were available Friday but his family in California said they were thrilled by the prospect.

Soldiers find time for hockey in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (AP)—"Attack! Attack! Attack! Attack!"

No bombs nor rockets—just a spectator yelling during a tight game of the Kandahar Ball Hockey League, played Monday through Friday nights at NATO's biggest military base in southern Afghanistan.

There's no ice and no puck, but no matter. Canadian troops still get their ice hockey fix—even in the middle of a war.

Occasional rocket attacks, sudden deployments and other military operations don't stop the league, which is held twice a year to match six-month stints of Canadian troops who share the base with forces from the United States, Britain and other nations.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Officials: Suicide bomb kills 6 in Afghan south

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP)—A suicide car bomber detonated his explosives near a hotel in southern Afghanistan on Thursday, killing at least six people and wounding nearly two dozen, officials said. The blast in Kandahar happened as NATO and Afghan forces are preparing for a joint offensive against Taliban militants in the neighboring province of Helmand in a major bid to break the Taliban stranglehold on the south. A policeman in the district where the blast occurred, Ahmed Shah Khan, said the bomber's target was not immediately clear, and the explosives may have detonated prematurely. The blast occurred in a busy commercial area near a major road that is frequently used by U.S. officials and other dignitaries in Kandahar, the main commercial center of the south.

Report: China sentences 25 kidnappers to death

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese state media say 25 people have been sentenced to death for their roles in nine kidnapping cases. The state-run Xinhua News Agency says two courts in the southern province of Guangdong handed down the sentences Thursday. The high number of death sentences at once is unusual, though China executes more people than any other country. In one of the kidnapping for ransom cases, Xinhua says the victim died from violent treatment. Xinhua says the courts in the provincial capital of Guangzhou also sentenced 26 others to up to 20 years in prison for kidnapping.

Vietnam tries dissident writer on assault charges

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—A Vietnamese journalist and democracy activist went on trial for alleged assault Friday as authorities continued a crackdown on dissent in which 16 people have been sent to prison in just over three months. Tran Khai Thanh Thuy, 49, has been active in Vietnam's small democracy movement, which has promoted political pluralism in a country where the Communist government does not tolerate political competition. Human rights groups have described the case against Thuy as a perversion of justice in which undercover police watched thugs attack her—and then charged Thuy with assault.

World

Protestants accept deal to save NIreland govt

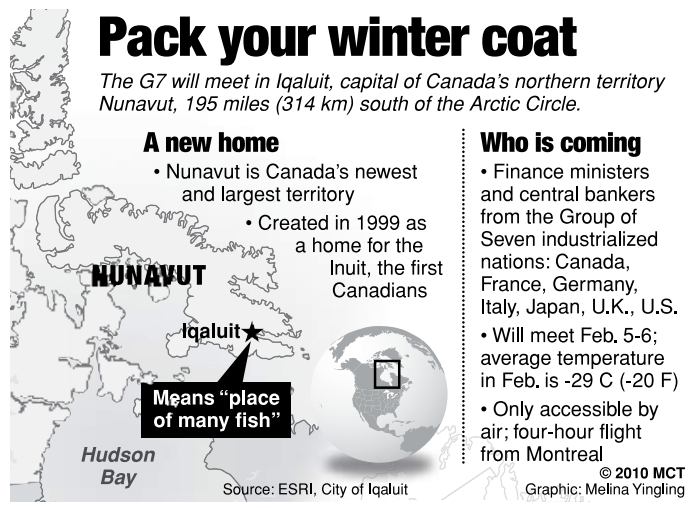
BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP)—Lawmakers from Northern Ireland's major Protestant party have unanimously backed a compromise plan with the Catholic minority to save their power-sharing government, Democratic Unionist Party leader Peter Robinson declared Friday.

Robinson, who leads the troubled 2 1/2-year-old coalition at the heart of Northern Ireland's 1998 peace accord, announced the midnight breakthrough following 10 days and nights of negotiations that had left negotiators on the edge of exhaustion.

The Catholics of Sinn Fein - who precipitated the power-sharing crisis by threatening to withdraw from the coalition, forcing its collapse—had already announced their backing for the still-confidential plan. But Robinson's Democratic Unionists were publicly divided over whether to cut a new deal with Sinn Fein.

The prime ministers of Britain and Ireland, Gordon Brown and Brian Cowen, are expected to fly back to Northern Ireland later Friday and publish full details of the new power-sharing pact at a press conference in Hillsborough Castle outside Belfast.

Financial turmoil strikes as G-7 officials gather


Pack your winter coat
The G7 will meet in Iqaluit, capital of Canada's northern territory Nunavut, 195 miles (314 km) south of the Arctic Circle.
A new home
• Nunavut is Canada's newest and largest territory
• Created in 1999 as a home for the Inuit, the first Canadians
NUNAVUT
Iqaluit
Means "place of many fish"
Hudson Bay
Who is coming
• Finance ministers and central bankers from the Group of Seven industrialized nations: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, U.K., U.S.
• Will meet Feb. 5-6; average temperature in Feb. is -29 C (-20 F)
• Only accessible by air; four-hour flight from Montreal
Source: ESRI, City of Iqaluit
© 2010 MCT
Graphic: Melina Yingling

IQALUIT, Nuvavut (AP)—A bout of turmoil in global markets has provided sobering reminder to global financial leaders that the aftershocks from the worst recession in seven decades are far from over.

Finance ministers and central bank presidents from the world's seven major industrial countries—the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Canada—were scheduled to arrive Friday for discussions in this small snow-swept Canadian town about 200 miles south of the Arctic Circle.

The talks are expected to be dominated by the question of how much longer extraordinary government stimulus should be provided to lift economic growth.

The risks still facing the global economy were highlighted dramatically after bad economic news sent markets plunging around the world on Thursday.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell by 268 points or 2.6 percent, its biggest one-day loss in seven months.

The slide had begun in Europe over concerns about high debt levels in Greece, Portugal and Spain.

10 Americans charged in Haiti with kidnapping

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—Ten U.S. Baptist missionaries were charged with kidnapping Thursday for trying to take 33 children out of Haiti to a hastily arranged refuge just as officials were trying to protect children from predators in the chaos of a great earthquake.

The Haitian lawyer who represents the 10 Americans portrayed nine of his clients as innocents caught up in a scheme they did not understand. But attorney Edwin Coq did not defend the actions of the group leader, Laura Silsby, though he continued to represent her.

"I'm going to do everything I can to get the nine out. They were naive. They had no idea what was going on and they did not know that they needed official papers to cross the border," Coq said. "But Silsby did."

The Americans, most members of two Idaho churches, said they were rescuing abandoned children and orphans from a nation that UNICEF says had 380,000 even before the catastrophic Jan. 12 quake.

WORLD BRIEFS

Venezuelan police break up anti-Chavez protest

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Police used tear gas, plastic bullets and water cannons to scatter hundreds of students protesting against the government Thursday, while President Hugo Chavez's supporters celebrated the 18th anniversary of his failed coup as an army officer. Caracas Police Chief Carlos Meza said authorities broke up the protest because university students had not been granted permission to march. He said the denial was aimed at preventing clashes with thousands of "Chavistas" marching across the capital to mark the botched 1992 military rebellion that Chavez led as a lieutenant colonel. "They don't have permission to march," Meza said. Student leaders countered that they have the right to stage peaceful protests, and they said authorities loyal to Chavez frequently deny them permission to demonstrate. Before the protest was dispersed, students chanted: "We're students, not coup plotters!"

UN chief can't judge if Gaza probes are 'credible'

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. secretary-general reported Thursday night he was uncertain whether Israel or the Palestinians had met U.N. demands to undertake "credible" investigations into allegations that they deliberately targeted civilians during last year's Gaza offensive. Ban Ki-moon's highly anticipated report to the 192-nation General Assembly cautioned that such investigations must be conducted "wherever there are credible allegations of human rights abuses." Israel says it has launched investigations into 150 separate incidents, including 36 criminal probes so far, and gathered evidence from almost 100 Palestinians who had complaints or were witnesses.

Egypt restores monastery touting religious harmony

ZAAFARANA, Egypt (AP)—Egypt's chief archaeologist unveiled on Thursday an extensive renovation of the oldest monastery in the world, touting the work at the 1,600 year-old-site as a symbol of peaceful coexistence between the country's Muslims and Christians. It's the message Egypt's government has been emphasizing ever since a lethal drive-by shooting at a church a month ago in a southern town: No troubles here—dismissing new worries over sectarian divisions between Egypt's mainly Muslim population and the large Christian minority. "The announcement we are making today shows to the world how we are keen to restore the monuments of our past, whether Coptic, Jewish or Muslims," he said, referring to the dominant Christian sect in Egypt.

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Saturday, February 6, 2010

RP labor attaché backs strong reintegration program for OFWs

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Philippine government's current major thrust is to strengthen its reintegration program for overseas Filipino workers, according to the Philippine's new labor attaché for the CNMI, Carmelina R. Francisco-Velasquez.

In an interview yesterday, Velasquez said her office's focus is to conduct livelihood trainings because they want OFWs to be productive or to acquire additional skills.

"We want them to have a fallback. They can easily get jobs in the Philippines if they know a lot of skills. That's our major task now," said Velasquez.

She said their other priority is to intensify the information campaign in the CNMI about developments in the Philippines.

Velasquez said the trainings the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration has been conducting in the CNMI for Filipino workers are part of the Philippine government's reintegration program.

Velasquez arrived last Jan. 26 to replace Joan Lourdes D. Lavilla, who ended her six-year tour of duty in the CNMI. She is also currently the director of OWWA's Funds and Investment Management Office and is in charge of the pre-departure orientation seminar program.

Philippine labor attaché for the CNMI Carmelina R. Francisco-Velasquez.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Her last assignment abroad was as labor attaché for Brunei from 2003 to 2005.

Velasquez said the situation for Filipino workers in the CNMI is different compared to those in Brunei because there's a lot of uncertainties here as a result of the federalization of local immigration.

"But Saipan is like Brunei… it's quiet, clean, and peaceful," she said.

Velasquez said one of the things she appreciates about Saipan is the lack of vehicular traffic, compared to the situation in Metro Manila.

Unlike her predecessor, Velasquez said her stint on Saipan will last only two years because she is currently the director of OWWA's Funds and Investment Management Office in Manila.

"We, as officers of OWWA, are given this opportunity to get overseas assignments under the cross-posting scheme. That's for two years," she said.

Full-fledged labor attachés like Lavilla are given six-year tours of duty.

Some labor attachés, Velasquez said, are assigned for three years in one country and three more years in another country, for a total of six years.

Velasquez encouraged OFWs in the CNMI to maintain the Filipinos' image as hardworking people who are experts at multi-tasking.

To hone their communication skills, Filipino workers should participate in POLO's English and other language courses, she said.

"They have to keep that up so we can have a bright future. That's why we have the reintegration program. We're also preparing them in case they want to return to the [Philippines] for good," Velasquez said.

A native of Baliuag, Bulacan, Velasquez obtained her bachelor's degree in Sociology in 1972 at the University of Sto. Tomas. She has a master's degree in public management from the Development Academy of the Philippines.

Velasquez participated in the regional policy dialogue on harnessing the developmental potentials of remittances in Italy in 2009. She joined in the marketing mission in Canada in August 2008 and served as guest speaker in a conference of Philippine Schools Overseas in Dubai in May 2008.

Velasquez's travels and missions outside the Philippines include Taiwan, Greece, Rome, Milan, Spain, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

PhilPost to get wired, to hasten remittances

By RONNEL DOMINGO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—The money remittance system of the Philippine Postal Corp. may finally go electronic, enabling the state firm to offer the same convenience that private money forwarders do at just about a fourth of the fees charged.

EXCHANGE RATES
DOLLAR $1.00 = PESO P46.50

RRELATED NEWS

9 percent growth in 2010 remittances seen. **PAGE 14**

This is made possible with a P1-billion loan that the Social Security System is extending PhilPost through a partnership related to the unified multi-purpose identification (UMID) system.

Top officials of PhilPost and SSS Tuesday inked a pact that widens the coverage of the UMID system.

Before the partnership, the planned UMID covered only four agencies, providing a single ID card for members of the SSS, Government Service Insurance System, Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth) and the Home Development Mutual Fund.

SSS is the lead agency in the implementation of the UMID project, which was spelled out in Executive Order No. 420 that was issued in 2005.

The UMID project is supposed to "enhance the integrity" of state-issued ID cards, ease government transactions, cut costs and minimize redundant databases.

Globe to set up huge remittance network

Globe Telecom Inc. has secured regulatory approval to build the biggest remittance network in the country, using the company's 18,000 prepaid loading stations, such as convenience stores and food establishments, throughout the country.

Globe yesterday said in a statement that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Monetary Board recently approved the request of Globe subsidiary G-Xchange Inc. (GXI), to use the telco's subdistributors as GCash outlets.

"Our distribution system is one of our most valuable assets and combined with our current GCash network of partners will help us significantly expand our efforts to provide a vehicle for financial inclusion to more Filipinos all over the country," said Ernesto Cu, president and CEO of the telecommunications unit of Ayala Corp. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer)***

Manny Pacquiao decides to simply fight on

By BILL DWYRE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—Manny Pacquiao is back in town. Boxing is like phases of the moon, and Pacquiao is in the training phase.

There will be a fight, all right. But not the one the world wanted, nor Pacquiao and his trainer, Freddie Roach.

"I wanted Mayweather bad, real bad," Roach says.

"I'm not angry at Floyd," Pacquiao says. "I just feel disappointed in his allegations."

It is a Monday afternoon at Roach's Wild Card Gym in Hollywood. The air is stale, the noise often deafening and the entire place decorum-challenged, unless you are into wrinkled 1972 boxing posters. That's as it should be. They train boxers here, not ballerinas.

Pacquiao prepares for a March 13 fight that was to be between him, recently acclaimed fighter of the decade in a vote by the U.S. Boxing Writers, and Floyd Mayweather Jr., who would tell you the boxing writers got it wrong. Now, the fight will be between Pacquiao and Joshua Clottey.

Once Pacquiao and Mayweather parted ways in the well-documented drug-testing dispute, Mayweather agreed to fight Shane Mosley on May 1 at MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Mosley has signed the contract deal, but as of Monday night, Mayweather had not.

Richard Schaefer, chief executive of Oscar De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions, says he expects the Mayweather signature any minute. He also says that Mosley agreed to all the Olympic-style random testing, including blood testing right up to fight time, that Pacquiao had rejected.

There are attempts from all camps to portray this fallback outcome as just fine for boxing, maybe even better.

Roach says Clottey might give fight fans a better show than the tactical, defensive-minded Mayweather because "Clottey comes forward and it could become a war." Pacquiao refers to the new Dallas Cowboys Stadium, where his fight will be held in front of an expected 40,000 people, as "a beautiful place," and the Top Rank camp of Bob Arum characterizes the new venue as an important step in bringing new fans to the sport. Schaefer says that, as great as the 40-0 Mayweather is, Mosley's stunning domination of Antonio Margarito 13 months ago at Staples Center in Los Angeles proves how dangerous he is.

Still, the loss of the Pacquiao-Mayweather mega-fight, one that could have put as much as $40 million in each fighter's pocket, hangs in the Wild Card Gym like the smell of body odor.

"In the end," Roach says, "if we had given in on the blood testing, it would have been like giving Mayweather the first round. Why would we do that?

"Manny hates needles. He said that's what cost him the first (Erik) Morales fight (March 2005). We made a mistake on that one. Nevada has every boxer give blood once a year, and Manny hadn't done that, so we had to do it the night before the fight, just like Mayweather wanted. Manny said it made him weak for three days. Even if they took blood from him 14 days before the fight, that would have meant I lose him on key sparring days 14, 13, and 12 days out."

The Mayweather camp will read that and chuckle. Those theorizing that Pacquiao must use steroids or he would have agreed to the extra drug testing will not be moved.

There is the issue of time running out on Pacquiao's boxing career. He will run for Congress in the Philippines in mid-May. Roach has said he doesn't think Pacquiao can be a marquee boxer and a politician at the same time. Asked about that Monday, Pacquiao says, "Why not?"

There is the issue of how much these next fights could mess things up. Were Clottey to win, might not Pacquiao see that as a perfect time to retreat to politics full time? Were Mosley to win, might that not do the same thing?

"Shane came to the gym twice to ask me to let him fight Manny," Roach says. "I told him no both times, and both times for the same two reasons: First, there isn't enough money there, and second, you're too good a fighter."

There is the issue of Pacquiao's current lawsuit against the Mayweathers for defamation. Pacquiao's attorney, Daniel Petrocelli, says that the case is in federal court in Nevada, is moving at full speed and can be in trial by year's end.

But the real issue remains lost money for the boxers and lost opportunity for the sport. For now, Pacquiao-Mayweather has gone away, but probably not forever.

Pacquiao is asked whether he is so angry at Mayweather that he will never be able to bring himself to step into the ring against him.

"No, I can fight him," Pacquiao says. "I'm just not sure he ever really wanted the fight."

Roach is asked whether the fight that didn't happen has now become like a burr in his saddle.

He nods.

Philippine massacre victims seek relief from ASEAN

By OLIVER TEVES
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Relatives of journalists killed in the Philippines' worst election massacre on Wednesday asked Southeast Asia's nascent human rights body to ensure that suspects—including a powerful clan allied with the president—did not escape justice.

Fifty-seven people, including at least 30 journalists and their staff, were on their way to register a gubernatorial candidate Nov. 23 when they were stopped by police, soldiers and militiamen and gunned down allegedly on orders of a rival clan.

Andal Ampatuan Jr., a town mayor in southern Maguindanao province where his family held sway for years, has been charged with multiple murder and has denied involvement. His father, former governor Andal Ampatuan Sr., and some 160 others also are facing murder and rebellion charges.

The relatives of 14 of the journalists filed a 23-page petition, the first of its kind, at the newly formed Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, asking the body to keep the Philippines accountable to the victims.

Specifically, they sought an "urgent pronouncement" from the Jakarta, Indonesia-based commission "calling on the Philippine state to abide with its obligations under international law and ensure the prosecution and conviction of the perpetrators of the massacre as well as the provision of adequate reparations, including compensation and satisfaction, to the victims and their heirs."

The commission was unveiled in October during a summit of ASEAN, which groups the Philippines with Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand pushed for the commission's creation mainly to deal with military-ruled Myanmar, and Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said last July it would focus on promotion rather than protection of human rights. ASEAN members are sensitive to outside intervention in domestic affairs.

Human rights lawyer Harry Roque, who represents the petitioners, said the killings were attributable under international law to the Philippine government under President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, because the suspects were state agents—police, soldiers and local officials—and because senior government and military officials failed to prevent the massacre.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, the most senior member of Arroyo's Cabinet, said Arroyo and other officials were unaware of the alleged plans of the Ampatuans to kill their rivals.

Arroyo had made political alliances with the Ampatuans and their rivals, the Mangudadatus, but was believed particularly indebted to the Ampatuans who delivered crucial votes for her in the 2004 election. Arroyo's administration party expelled the Ampatuans shortly after the massacre.

The petition said there were "well-founded fears that the Philippine state will be under very heavy pressure from the Ampatuans to whitewash the investigation or to cover up crucial evidence."

AP

Suspect Mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr., center, is franked by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation, as he arrives for the resumption of his trial Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2010 at Camp Crame in suburban Quezon City, north of Manila, Philippines. Ampatuan Jr., the principal suspect in the massacre of 57 civilians, including 30 members of the media and relatives of opposing candidate.

PHILIPPINE BRIEFS

Truck falls off cliff in Aurora, 3 injured

SAN FERNANDO CITY—A truck carrying 38 motorcycles lost its brakes and fell into a 30-foot deep cliff in Aurora province on Thursday night, seriously injuring the driver and his two helpers. The truck was making a descent on the portion of national highway in Barangay Dianawan in Maria Aurora when it lost its brakes at around 9:30 p.m., said Senior Superintendent Romulo Esteban, chief of the provincial police. It was the second vehicular accident in the town since December last year. That month, 11 people died when their truck fell into a ravine. The highway has no concrete or steel barriers on the sides. The driver Leonard Lumanlan, 24, and helpers Edgardo Bragais, 23, and Guillermo Nosal, survived the incident but sustained serious injuries, said Inspector Mike Amio, chief of police in Maria Aurora. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer)***

3 siblings stabbed dead in Laguna

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Three siblings were stabbed dead inside their home in Alaminos town, Laguna late Thursday night, police said Friday. Senior Inspector Ronaldo Idelfonso, Alaminos police chief, said Christina, 14; Jason, 12; and Jerome, 9, all surnamed Rafael, were stabbed in different parts of their bodies around 11 p.m. inside their home in Barangay (village) San Idelfonso. Idelfonso said police still have no suspect and were still determining motive for the killing. Police said the children's parents left the victims in their home around 7:30 p.m. and only discovered the incident when they returned from a drinking session at a neighbor's house an hour before midnight. ***(Inquirer Southern Luzon)***

TV camera man hit by taxi cab while covering road accident

MANILA, Philippines—A camera man working for a television network landed in a hospital Thursday after a taxi cab hit him while he was taking footage of an accident near a footbridge along Mindanao Avenue in Quezon City.

Supt. Rudie Valoria, head of the Quezon City Traffic Enforcement Group, identified the victim as Antonio Guinturo of Channel 9 Radio Philippines Network. Valoria said Guinturo was taking shots of a dump truck that crashed on the footbridge at around 2:30 a.m. when a cab suddenly appeared and hit the camera man. The traffic chief said the taxi driver, Roel Navarette, had slowed down to view the accident and did not see the victim crouched on the side of the truck filming the scene. The taxi's front bumper hit Guniturо's face and squashed his camera when he dropped it after he was hit. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer)***

3 foreigners dead, 4 hurt in Isabela road accident

ILAGAN, Isabela—Three Indian nationals were killed while four others were hurt when the foreigners' pick-up rammed into a Tuguegarao-bound Dagupan Bus at 10:30 p.m. Thursday, at a blind curve on the national highway in Barangay (village) Malalam here, a police official said. Superintendent Baltazar Israel, Ilagan police chief, identified the fatalities as Sangeet Sharma, Kumar Sandeep, both from Tumauini town; and Joginder Singh of Delfin Albano town. Israel said the Indian nationals were riding a Mitsubishi Strada pick-up driven by Sharma. He said the injured passengers identified as Odilon Ruma, Rosario Decena and Joseph Badajos and driver Joselito De Leon of the Dagupan Bus were treated at the Faustino Dy Memorial Hospital. The police said the pick-up truck cut through the right lane and slammed into the bus. ***(Inquirer Northern Luzon)***

4 killed in separate attacks in Iloilo

ILOILO CITY—Four persons died and six others, including a 2-year-old girl, were wounded in separate shooting and grenade-throwing incidents in two Iloilo towns Wednesday night, police said. Two persons died and five others were hurt in barangay Ipil, Calinog town, 59.3 km north of Iloilo city when shots were fired and a grenade was thrown at the home of the Casabuena family around 9 p.m. Supt. Ranulfo Demiar, information officer of the Police Regional Office in Wester Visayas, identified the fatalities as Roger Soliquen, 39, and Rosario Casabuena, 78. The wounded were identified as Jose Casabuena, Lourdes Casabuena and children Lorex, 12; Lorie Mar, 9; and Louie, 5. ***(Cebu Daily News)***

Revilla Jr., Estrada lead senatorial race—survey

MANILA, Philippines (INQUIRER.net)—Senators Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. and Jose "Jinggoy" Estrada are in a virtual tie for first place among 15 candidates who have a statistical chance of winning if the elections were to be held in the latter part of January, a Pulse Asia survey showed.

Of the 1,800 respondents aged 18 years and above polled from January 22-26, 51.9 percent said they would vote for Revilla while 50.4 percent would vote for Estrada, said the survey. The poll has a margin of error of ± 2 percent.

Other candidates with a statistical chance of winning are: Senator Pilar Juliana (Pia) Cayetano (46.8 percent); former Senate president Franklin Drilon (43.2 percent); Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago (41.2 percent); Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile (39.7 percent); former National Economic and Development Authority Director General Ralph Recto (34.4 percent); former senators Sergio Osmena (31.6 percent) and Vicente Sotto III (30.5 percent); Senator Manuel Lapid (29.7 percent); Ilocos Norte Representative Ferdinand R. Marcos (26.3 percent); and Jose P. de Venecia III (24 percent).

The survey said within "striking distance" for a senatorial seat were Muntinlupa Representative Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon (19.8 percent); Bukidnon Representative Teofisto Guingona III (19.7 percent); and lawyer Alexander L. Lacson (19.1 percent)—ranked 13th to 15th.

The survey added that despite a very low awareness level of 33 percent, Lacson, contrary to previous trends in pre-election voting preferences, was "making it."

At the same time, the survey said that one out of 10 Filipinos or 10.9 percent does not express support for any of the senatorial candidates for the May 2010 elections, which would be much higher than the December 2009 figure of 3.4 percent.

Steady rise in HIV cases noted

LEGAZPI CITY—The Philippine National AIDS Council has noted a steady increase in the number of infections involving the human immunodeficiency virus that causes the deadly AIDS, with at least one case reported every three days.

In a phone interview Thursday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer, PNAC executive director Ferchito Avelino said this had been the trend in the country for the past three years, and that there were already 1,244 HIV cases reported as of the end of 2009.

What was alarming, Avelino said, was that the figure represented only 34 percent of the cases, which meant that the remaining 66 percent had yet to be accounted for.

The PNAC also disclosed in its latest findings that as of November 2009, the mode of HIV transmission was predominantly heterosexual but was shifting to bisexual mode and "males having sex with males."

It said that 54 percent of MSM cases had been reported.

The other groups with an increasingly high risk of vulnerability are migrant workers, especially women, due to unsafe migration and mobility, and those using drugs intravenously, the PNAC said.

Call center employees were particularly cited in last week's reports on the rise of HIV cases in the Philippines. Health Secretary Esperanza Cabral said many employees in call centers were young people with unhealthy lifestyles that included risky behavior—multiple sexual partners and engaging in unprotected sex—as well as smoking, alcohol drinking and inadequate sleep. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer)***

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9 percent growth in 2010 remittances seen

By MICHELLE REMO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Cebuana Lhuillier Service Corp. expects an 8- to 9-percent growth in remittances to the Philippines this year in line with the anticipated modest recovery of the global economy from the crisis.

The remittance growth forecast exceeds the government's projection of only 6 percent.

The latest global economic turmoil, considered the worst since the Great Depression in the 1930s, led to wage cuts and layoffs that adversely affected incomes including those of Filipinos working in countries that fell into recession.

John Henri Lhuillier, president of CLSC, yesterday said the company's outlook on overall remittances to the Philippines in 2010 was positive and that the likely increase in money sent by overseas-based Filipinos will drive growth of the remittance business in the country.

CLCS expects to benefit from the growth in remittances.

"We (CLSC) will continue to improve our services and strengthen our relations with our remittance partners," Lhuillier said during the launch of the firm's "24k Cebuana Card" held at Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

In an interview at the sidelines of the event, CLSC general manager Fernando Bacungan said the company was expecting to facilitate much more remittances this year than the level last year. Cebuana Lhuillier expects its remittance business to grow by between 26 percent and 30 percent, repeating the performance last year, Bacungan said.

CLSC earlier estimated that the 30-percent growth in remittances it facilitated last year translated to about $1.5 billion.

Bacungan said growth would be fueled by money coming particularly from the Middle East, Guam and Australia.

He said the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration recently signed an agreement with its counterparts in Australia involving the deployment of more Filipino workers in said countries.

Bacungan said Australia requires about 300,000 Filipino workers, while Guam has expressed intention to accept 15,000 Filipinos.

CLSC, the remittance arm of PJ Lhuillier Group of Companies, intends to further build its business this year by engaging in more partnerships with foreign remittance companies and local banks.

RP economy seen growing by 4.5 percent

By DORIS DUMLAO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—The Philippine economy will likely perform better than government and market expectations this 2010 on robust remittance inflows, London-based think tank Capital Economics said.

The think tank also sees the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas jacking up its key interest rates by a total of 100 basis points beginning April.

In a Jan. 18 macroeconomic commentary, Capital Economics projected that the country's gross domestic product growth could accelerate to 4.5 percent this year—higher than the government target of 3-4 percent and the consensus growth expectation of 3.8 percent. This was seen on the back of a projected 7-9 percent growth in remittances.

"Worker remittance inflows should increase as the global upswing continues, even though we anticipate that the recoveries in the US, Asia, and Europe will fade this year. Remittance inflows picked up late last year, although this is usual ahead of Christmas, and were up 5 percent in US dollar terms in the first eleven months of 2009," the research said.

Government officials are priming the markets to expect that fourth quarter GDP growth will hit 1 percent year-on-year compared to 0.8 percent in the second and third quarters. The research said the improving trend should continue this year. But as expected elsewhere in Asia, the first half of 2010 was seen growing far stronger than the second half.

Likewise seen supportive of faster growth would be a nascent pick-up in exports, with electronics shipments leading the way. In addition, the think tank said bank lending had improved and should stay strong.

BACK FROM HAITI AP

A military chaplain blesses the flag-draped caskets of four Filipino soldiers from the Philippine contingent to the U.N. Peacekeeping force in Haiti who were killed in the devastating earthquake last month, during heroes welcome Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010 at Villamor Air Base in Manila, Philippines. Two more Filipinos remain missing in the 7.0 magnitude quake that killed more than 150,000 people.

Inflation in Philippines slips to 4.3 percent

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Lower prices for fruits and vegetables helped bring inflation in the Philippines down to 4.3 percent in January, the government said Friday.

The monthly rate eased slightly from 4.4 percent in December, but the National Statistics Office said it was watching price signals and market developments, noting that the cost of other food items such as rice, fish, eggs, sugar and flour products had increased.

Inflation in the same period last year was sharply higher at 7.1 percent. The average inflation rate for 2009 was 3.2 percent compared with 9.3 percent in 2008, and is projected at 4.7 percent this year.

The central bank in January left its benchmark interest rate at a record low 4 percent.

7 new RP envoys' appointments confirmed

MANILA, Philippines—The Commission on Appointments (CA) confirmed the appointments of seven ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary (AEPs) and two officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) during its plenary session Wednesday.

Confirmed by the CA were:

■ Linglingay F. Lacanlale – AEP to Thailand and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. She is currently the AEP to Austria.

■ Lourdes O. Yparraguire – AEP to Austria, with concurrent jurisdiction Croatia, Slovenia, and the Slovak Republic. She is the assistant secretary for American Affairs.

■ Nestor N. Padalhin – AEP to Nigeria, with concurrent jurisdiction over Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Cote d' Ivoire, Equitorial Guinea, the Gabonese Republic, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leon, and Togo. He is vice chairman of the Overseas Absentee Voting Secretariat and special assistant at the Office of the Undersecretary for Special and Ocean Concerns.

■ Romeo L. Manalo – AEP to Italy. He is the chief coordinator of the Office of the Secretary.

■ Eva G. Betita – AEP to Brazil, with concurrent jurisdiction over Colombia, Guyana, and Suriname. She is the Philippine consul general in Sydney, Australia

■ Bayani V. Mangibin – AEP to Iraq. He is the chair-alternate to the Technical Cooperation Council of the Philippines

■ Bahnarim A. Guinomla – AEP to Bangladesh with concurrent jurisdiction over Sri Lanka and Maldives. He is the assistant secretary for DFA Mindanao.

The CA also confirmed the promotion of two officers: Philippine consul general to New York Cecilia B. Rebong was promoted to Chief of Mission, Class I and Patricia Ann Paez was promoted to Chief of Mission, Class II. Paez is currently assigned at the Office of Presidential Protocol in Malacanang. ***(INQUIRER.net)***

TAKE CHARGE

Still paying for your holiday purchases?

Editor's Note: This is part of Take Charge of Your Money, a partnership between INQUIRER.net and Citibank to help readers handle their personal finances well.

Question: It's February and I'm still paying for all the gifts I bought over the holidays, not to mention the Christmas get-together dinners with friends. I can't believe I have racked up a debt of P30,000. This is more than what I earn in a month. How can I pay off this bill?—Maya

Answer: You are not alone, Maya. Other people are also scratching and shaking their heads at how they have spent so much for gifts and parties during the last holiday season. For some of them, they only learned how much debt they have accumulated when the bills arrived in January.

Overwhelming as it may seem, it is not a hopeless situation. The fact that you are aware of the need to do something about it is a good start. Others may just shrug it off and default on their payments, not knowing that the consequences will be much worse.

Below we share specific tips on how you can handle a debt like this and make sure any future debt will be manageable.

1 Review all your bills. Did you charge your expenses to your credit card? Make sure all entries are valid and that you did make those purchases. In case there is a dubious entry, find out if you made that purchase; if not, call the credit card company hotline right away. Most hotlines are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

2 Draft a payment plan. If paying off the entire bill in one go may be difficult, as you said this is more than your monthly pay, break up the total bill in smaller "monthly bills." See how much you can afford to pay each month taking into account your day-to-day expenses. Credit cards usually indicate a minimum amount due that you need to settle to keep your account current. Make sure you pay that and on time, to maintain a good credit history. If you can afford to pay more, do so. This way, you will be able to settle your balance in a shorter period.

3 How about an installment plan? Some credit card companies allow clients to convert their balance into an installment plan. Cardholders prefer this so they have a better idea of how much they need to pay every time, and also because they know when the debt will be fully paid. Citi cardholders can avail this simply by calling the 24-hour customer hotline. Check with your credit card company if this option appeals to you.

4 Own more than one credit card? If you have more than one credit card, and carry substantial balances in both, consider consolidating all in one account for easier tracking and payment. Balance conversion offers by credit card companies give attractive low rates so make sure you ask around. You may also consider switching to a card that offers cash rebates, such as the Citi Cashback Card.

5 Take out a loan, if need be. If, after making a payment plan, you realize it simply is not doable or it will take you two years or more to pay off the entire debt with interest, you may want to consider taking out a loan from your employer or the GSIS or SSS, or a bank. The advantage of this is that you free up the credit line of your card for emergencies, you will enjoy lower interest rates, and you will know the length of time it will take you to pay off your debt. Citibank Savings offers personal loans that can be released in as soon as two days.

6 If you earn any extra income or receive any cash windfall (for instance, bonus, gift or a cash raffle prize), use it to pay off your debt. This will greatly help you bring down your balance, and pay your obligation more quickly.

7 Have the whole family in on this goal of helping you get out of debt. In thinking of where and how to spend time together, go for budget-friendly activities and shop wisely.

And to make sure you don't find yourself in the same situation next year, this early, make a list of people you intend to give gifts to in December for the holiday season. Set a clear budget for each gift and make a note to yourself not to go beyond it. Throughout the year, you will find items that will suit the recipient and fit your budget. Make little purchases throughout the year to spread out your spending so you won't be tempted to charge everything in December and receive another big credit card bill in January. Good luck!

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Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Dolphy: I wasn't a priority Kapamilya

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

The King of Comedy has left the building—the ABS-CBN building, that is, and he's moving to Manny Pangilinan's fledgling network TV5.

In a phone interview with Inquirer Entertainment on Monday, Dolphy confirmed the move.

"Nag-pa-plano na kami ng bagong show, mismong si Manny ang nakausap ko at ang top brass ng TV5," he said.

Dolphy is an endorser of Smart, the telecommunications giant headed by Pangilinan.

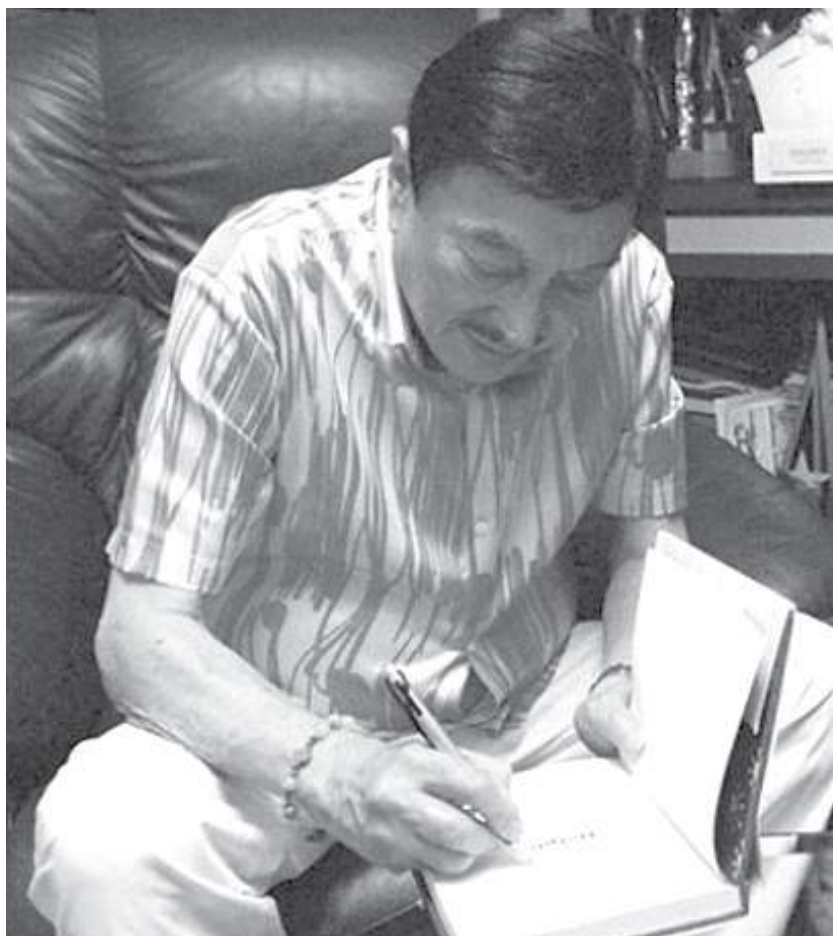
Dolphy said he informed ABS-CBN, through Entertainment head Linggit Tan, of his impending transfer during the recent birthday party of ABS-CBN TV host Willie Revillame.

He sensed that ABS-CBN didn't take his decision well. "Mukhang masama ang loob. Pero pinaliwanag ko naman na unfair sa akin. Tatlong taon na akong walang trabaho."

"Utoy," his last project with ABS-CBN, was shelved, he said.

"I felt as if I was taken for granted. Sabi nila inaalala lang daw nila ang health ko. Parang tinuring nila na retired na ako," he said.

He's far from retired, he asserted. "Hinahanap ng katawan ko ang trabaho."



ROMY HOMILLADA
Why Dolphy is signing a (non-exclusive) contract with TV5: No work for three years now as Kapamilya.

The veteran comedian said: "Saka wala naman akong existing contract ngayon kaya di naman ako puwedeng pigilan."

A meeting with ABS-CBN big boss Gabby Lopez was proposed. "Pero committed na ako sa TV5," Dolphy said, though details of his non-exclusive deal with TV5 were still being finalized.

He said he wasn't a priority in ABS-CBN: "Telenovela at drama ang focus nila ngayon. Hindi comedy."

It is ironic that a theater in the ABS-CBN studios is named after this new TV5 recruit. "Nagpapasalamat ako doon, pero trabaho ang gusto ko," he quipped in jest.

He agreed with fellow senior star Susan Roces' that veteran stars shouldn't be bound by exclusive contracts. (Roces also moved from ABS to GMA 7.)

"Dapat ang gawin nilang exclusive ang mga maliliit na artista... sila ang kailangan ng job security. Mas maganda na ang mga veteran na artista ay puwedeng magtrabaho kahit saan. Ilang taon na lang ang panahon ko sa trabaho, gusto ko lang sulitin."

Carla-Geoff not playing second fiddle to Kris-Aljur

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—It's a war of the love teams.

Carla Abellana and Geoff Eigenmann know they are being pitted against Kris Bernal and Aljur Abrenica, their costars on GMA 7's "The Last Prince."

"Our fans shouldn't get upset," Carla explains. "We're not playing support." Geoff agrees: "Our roles are crucial in the series."

Carla and Geoff are "secure" that the network has plans for their tandem after "Rosalinda" and "SRO Cinemaserye Presents Carinderia Queen."

Are they willing to work with other partners? Carla doesn't mind being paired with "Starstruck V" co-host Dennis Trillo or Mark Anthony Fernandez, or Robin Padilla.

Carla Abellana

Geoff isn't keen on the idea. "I'd rather not split up the love team right now."

But again, Carla and Geoff side-step the possibility of being partners offscreen as well. "We are happy with what we have now," Carla says. "I must admit that working constantly has developed our friendship. But we're not yet a couple."

They often have petty quarrels, she says. "We argue about food. He forces me to eat; I stop him from pigging out. He's stubborn." Geoff doesn't deny that: "I like getting my way [but] after three shows [together], we are doing well both onscreen and off."

Still, rivalry is not inevitable even between partners, especially in local show biz, where the female half of the love team always ends up being more popular.

Geoff doesn't mind playing second fiddle to Carla. "If she shines more than I do," he says, "then good for her. She's been working hard. That will never be an issue between us. The outcome of my career depends solely on me."

Willie 'easy to like'

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—At the auditions of "Pilipinas Got Talent," someone reportedly overheard Kris Aquino (who's a judge in the talent search) say, "Ayoko mang-okray ng contestants. Baka kasi di nila iboto si Noynoy." Perhaps she just said that in jest. Should there be a spin-off show, it ought to be called "Noy's Got Kris."

■ ■ ■

I was aghast when a colleague told me that Ronald Singson's staff at Channel V told a common friend not to invite me to interview the foreign artists that Ronald is bringing to Manila for a concert, because he didn't like what I wrote about him and Lovi Poe, complete with revealing pictures. That's his prerogative as the music channel's big boss. Is it his policy to mix professional and personal matters?

If he doesn't want his love life to be publicized, then he should stop pursuing actresses. As one actress that he used to date puts it, "Ganyan naman siya talaga. Pag nag-leak na sa press, ayaw na niya. Kaya inayawan ko siya."

Some people are afraid of their own shadows.

■ ■ ■

Is the Kapamilya network's newest sensation, former "Big Brother" housemate Sam Pinto, going to join "Wowowee" after she made quite an impact as a guest co-host?

"I'd rather concentrate on telenovelas first," she says. "But I'll still weigh things."

Willie Revillame has been vocal about his admiration for Sam. Is he BF material for her? "He's easy to like," she says, "though I'm a bit wary because of the various opinions about him. But I don't want to judge him, nor assume anything."

■ ■ ■

Just like the alternative ink brand that Christian Bautista endorses, Ink All-You-Can, he has definitely conquered all he can by captivating not just the Pinoy audience but the Indonesians and Malaysians as well.

What's the difference between performing locally and in other Asian countries? "In a performance of a new artist, the Indonesians will readily participate by waving their hands and singing along even if they just heard the song," he says. "Pinoys have to like the song and artist first before they respond to the performer."

Is he planning to relocate to Indonesia? "I would be willing to stay longer there because there are more offers, but not to relocate," he says. "I'll be spending Valentine's in Jakarta via a concert with an Indonesian singer/actress, Bunga Citra Lestari."

RUSHES

Teen star frolics on the isle of Lesbos

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Gender could be a deal breaker for this love team.

We previously reported on a teen tandem that didn't fly because the guy is involved with a gay director. Over at the rival network, another young screen couple may never cross over to real life—the female half of the pair was once linked to another girl.

Yup, Pretty Starlet had a fling with Lesbian Co-Star. A spy recalls how PS once displayed in her room an incriminating photo with LC.

Out-ing themselves

At the height of a national emergency over a decade ago, Sexy Seductress and (then) Sweet Teen Star were spotted rushing out of the penthouse condominium of Millionaire Mogul. The two practically out-ed themselves that day, said a neighbor.

From a high-class call girl, SS was demoted to the role of mama-san, procuring young women for MM, and one of her "talents" at the time was STS, who is now double her former size.

Not interested

Those in the know insist that Handsome Hunk is not the least bit interested in the overtures made by Powerful Exec.

PE admires HH, in a not-exactly-platonic sense, and is reportedly enticing HH to join his company, sparing no expense.

HH is not impressed. According to a mole, HH's family is as wealthy, if not wealthier, than PE.

Couch of discord

Shocking, but true. The ill-fated romance of Controversial Star and Aging Lothario ended because of a rather mundane reason: a sofa.

CS wanted to buy an expensive new couch, to impress friends.

Alas, with his meager salary, AL couldn't afford the luxury item. Right there and then, CS decided to drop AL.

Thud. Big.

Confirm, deny

Remember the recent item about the network that has a policy urging reporters not to wear yellow, orange and other politically loaded colors on-cam?

Rushes got a reaction from the country's top two networks in separate phone calls.

An ABS-CBN insider claims the Kapamilya channel has no such ruling. But a GMA 7 officer confirms there is a company-wide memo to that effect.

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed last weekend's gabfests on TV. (And why we are moved, if we are moved.)

■ Zsazsa Padilla, explaining an alleged snub over a reporter's question about Dingdong Dantes: "Hindi ako tumalikod … exit lang ako. Hindi ko talaga alam na ini-address yung question sa akin." (Acceptable—we've never known Zsazsa to shirk any form of eyeballing.)

■ Bianca King on reports Suzette Ranillo ordered her things out of a dressing tent: "Nasaktan ako but I'm over it. Siyempre, si Lord lang ang nakakaalam, di ba?" ('Wag na lang involve si Lord!)

■ Princess Snell on posing for a men's magazine: "Wala akong limits … It's a project and trabaho ko 'yun." (Princess who?)

■ Arci Muñoz, on tweets from Kian Cipriano and Rachel Ann Go denying her claim in a TV interview that a third party, referring to Rachel Ann, caused her breakup with the Callalily frontman: "Masaya na 'ko na nasabi ko yung part ko. Wala akong inagrabyado. Hindi ako nagbanggit ng kahit na anong pangalan …" (Good girl.)

■ Angelica Panganiban, asked if she was threatened when Jinkee Pacquiao admitted having a crush on Derek Ramsay: "Alam ko magkaibigan sila, nag-uusap sila. Minsan kapag nagkakausap sila, sinasabi sa akin ni Derek na kinukumusta nga niya ako," she said. "Pero hindi ako naba-bother." (Hmm, parang may kurot…)

■ Dingdong Dantes, asked how his romance with Marian Rivera … ('Wag na lang ito.)

■ Dingdong on asking for Marian's hand…('Wag na rin ito.)

■ Marian, asked how she would react … (See our hands? They're over our ears.)

With Gerry Plaza, Startalk, The Buzz, Showbiz Central

Maharlika – Opinyon

End of Aquino's free ride

Starting Wednesday, the duel between Senators Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and Manuel Villar for the lead in the presidential race hit a crucial point. In the Pulse Asia survey from Jan. 22 to 26, Villar caught up with Aquino's lead for the first time since the latter announced his presidential bid in September.

The survey showed both contenders running neck-and-neck, with Aquino being picked by 37 percent of the respondents as their choice for president, and Villar by 35 percent. Given the margin of error of plus or minus 2 percent, the two are considered to have come to a statistical tie.

Compared with the December 2009 survey, Villar's support improved by 12 percentage points while preference for Aquino declined by 8 points.

His critics attribute Aquino's decline to his relative administrative inexperience in government and his failure to spell out his program (he did it a few times with forums, including the one sponsored by the Makati Business Club) in public gatherings where he only pledged that he would never steal, if elected. He has underlined the theme that the main election issue is honesty and integrity in government, highlighting his contrast with Villar, who has not postured as a paragon of honesty in the light of the Senate investigation of the controversial transactions affecting his real estate enterprises.

The question is raised: From the dead heat, can Villar grab the lead from Aquino? And is Aquino on the way down?

The worst thing that can happen is a stalemate. While Villar cannot celebrate this stand-off, Aquino has been handed a jolt by this survey result, which should end the complacency of the Aquino camp. The latest Pulse Asia survey result signals the end of the free ride of Aquino on the wave of public sympathy and nostalgia following the death of his mother, President Corazon Aquino last August. The Cory spell has worn thin. Aquino is being forced by a shift in the public mood to reinvent his campaign strategy and focus on what he can do for the country to offer leadership change to an honest governance.

According to preferences by socio-economic classes, Aquino topped Villar with 37 percent, and Villar got 22 percent in the ABC class (the rich). In the D class (middle class), Aquino was the choice, 40 percent against Villar's 34 percent. Among the E class (the poor), Villar polled 39 percent, against Aquino's 31.

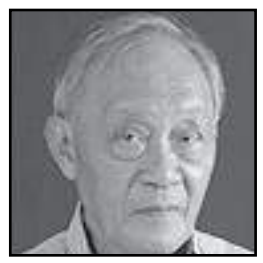
These results according to socio-economic categories provide clues for Aquino and Villar to redesign their campaign strategies, so that Villar can forge ahead or Aquino can stop his decline.

Whether or not the Senate investigation into the controversial transactions of Villar's real estate companies in the C-5 road extension project will hamper his chances of overtaking Aquino is a good question. His surge came amid the heated debates in the Senate in late January over the report of the committee of the whole recommending his censure after the committee found him guilty of unethical practices stemming from the road project.

The Senate adjourned its session last Wednesday, due to lack of quorum, preventing it from voting on the censure. It will resume its session in May. During the hiatus, the censure controversy will be removed from newspaper headlines. The adjournment allowed Villar to escape censure, which could have caused a fallout potentially harmful to his survey ratings.

Villar appeared on the Senate floor last Tuesday to defend himself in the C-5 controversy, but his defense was a monologue. He delivered a long privilege speech, but hurriedly left the floor and did not submit himself to interrogation by his fellow senators. His speech was full of denial of wrongdoing, but it appeared to have been addressed to the media.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, chair of the committee of the whole who prepared the committee report, said that while Villar attended the session after boycotting the hearings on the inquiry, he failed to explain his side. Enrile said it was up to the public to decide whether Villar or the committee told the truth. Enrile pointed out the report was backed by 990 documents "that could not lie," compared with Villar's "hollow" statements to "justify one's misconduct."



Analysis
By AMANDO DORONILA
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

The C-5 case will not disappear in the remaining weeks of the election. It is a major issue against Villar framed by the theme of honest government highlighted by Aquino.

The latest survey changed the mood and focus of the election campaign which now seems to be turning into an intense slugfest between Aquino and Villar.

The issue that looms in the wake of the survey is whether Aquino or Villar presents an alternative to President Macapagal-Arroyo and can offer better governance than her corruption scandal-ridden administration.

Aquino has defined honest government as the fundamental issue. By contrast, Villar has dodged the issue, and he and other presidential aspirants have focused on Aquino's lack of administrative experience and failure to present a program and policy on what he intends to do if elected.

In a recent speech to the business community, Aquino pledged that his government would not steal. None of his rivals, least of all Villar, took him up on this issue of good governance.

Villar has sidestepped this issue by hammering on the theme that he rose from "rags to riches" through entrepreneurship. He offers himself as a model of his "dream" of lifting millions of Filipinos from poverty. He stands as the only outstanding example of success of his model. The next surveys will tell if the people are seduced by this model.

EDITORIAL

Ping Lacson, tourist

Sen. Panfilo Lacson's flight from the law makes his political rival Sen. Manuel Villar, who showed up at the Senate last Monday, look downright courageous. But in fact, Lacson and Villar, together with other politicians, share something fundamental in common: They treat the legal as political. In doing so, they have helped undermine the credibility of the Senate.

To be sure, and as Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera told reporters, Lacson is not (yet) a fugitive. "Right now, he's still a tourist." True, but one whose government travel authority has lapsed, and who seems to have no intention of returning to the country anytime soon.

After Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan placed him on the watch list, Lacson broke a monthlong silence to say Libanan's action only confirmed what he had "correctly suspected," that "harassment" by the justice department "upon the order of Malacañang will never stop."

"That's exactly the reason I left the country. I am a victim of a conspiracy of whispers between Ms Arroyo and her stooge in the DoJ," Lacson added.

Maybe. As we have written in this space more than once before, it is regrettable that the colors of political partisanship have stained the belated but welcome prosecution of the Dacer-Corbito double murder.

And yet: Despite the many sorry instances of the politicized administration of justice in the Arroyo era, we have not yet reached the point where refusal to accept an arrest warrant or submit to the formal legal process can be condoned. In other words, Lacson must face the music.

"This is one case that I will dispute the argument 'flight is an indication of guilt,'" Lacson said on Tuesday. "I am not guilty but I cannot risk putting my life and security at the mercy of that evil conspiracy."

In the first place, the statement "flight is an indication of guilt" is not an argument; it is a legal presumption. And it is a presumption that must be disproved in a court of law, not by mere say-so.

Secondly, Lacson may well believe that his "life and security" will be at risk, if he stayed around for an arrest warrant to be served, but there is no showing, no evidence, for it. What he means is that he, a sitting senator, will be detained in jail, where he might be subjected to violence by people who delight in harassing new inmates. Another disputable assumption. That argument was never raised when deposed president Joseph Estrada was in detention.

Where does all this leave us? In the pits of a politicized legal process. Villar refused to appear before the Senate committee of the whole because he thought his political rivals had prejudged the ethics case against him. Unfair, he said. Lacson has left the country to evade arrest, because he thinks his political enemies have prepared a guilty verdict for him. Unfair, he says. Both, however, can afford to decline participation in the legal process, simply by painting it as politically partisan. Ordinary citizens have no choice. Talk about unfair.

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Quorum

There was a lack of quorum on the last day of the 14th Congress last Wednesday. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives lacked the warm bodies to officially conduct business, and so pending bills were not acted upon and will have to be resubmitted in the next Congress.

Watching edited snippets of the last day in Congress on TV made me wish that the next Congress will use part of its budget to broadcast their plenary sessions and committee hearings. While this cannot be as engaging as "Wowowee" or the numerous telenovelas, it is one way that our representatives and senators can be accountable to the people who elected them.

Radio and television enable citizens to see who are physically present and working. (We hope that the record for each senator and representative will be published at the end of each year showing: attendance; how they voted on important legislation; number of bills authored, submitted and passed; how and where their pork barrel was spent.) TV can be a cruel medium and we hope the camera will be allowed to pan so that citizens can see whose chairs and desks are occupied and empty. We hope the video will not be edited so that we can catch a slice of life in the session hall and see the lawmakers who are busy texting or blissfully sleeping on the job.

Looking Back
By AMBETH OCAMPO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Videotapes of congressional hearings and plenary sessions form part of the record, part of history. Modern technology makes the task of future historians more challenging because there are more sources than the official Congressional Record.

Transcripts are kept and published, but these only reflect what has been accepted into the record. Raw video footage will contain the "unparliamentary language" and other items that were stricken off the record.

I am told that both the Senate and the House maintain their own museums and libraries. They might be worth a visit while Congress is not in session. How far back do the records go? The old Congress building (now the National Gallery) was destroyed during the Battle for Manila in 1945 and along with it many records. I wonder in what year we switched from Spanish to English. I wonder if they have copies of the first sound and video recordings of sessions.

If these are still available, are steps being taken not just for their conservation but to transfer these to new media? Were records kept on floppy disks on Jurassic word programs like Wordstar transferred to better storage and media? How far back do our records go? Is it all the way back to the Philippine Assembly at the turn of the 20th century? Or all the way back to the Malolos or, should we rightfully say, the Barasoain Congress of 1898-1899 that marked the short-lived First Philippine Republic? With so many questions we will need an army of dedicated researchers to write up a full history of the Philippine legislature.

We have a compilation of the laws of the Malolos Republic, but unfortunately we do not have copies of the debates that went into them. How did the Founding Fathers see the nation at the time? How did they seek to address the challenges that faced them?

In the memoirs of Jose Alejandrino, "La senda del sacrificio" (1933), we learn that the former chemist turned general, Antonio Luna, had a seat in the Malolos Congress. Alejandrino narrated how the hotly debated issue of separation of Church and State was passed by a slim majority through a clever maneuver that involved manipulating the warm bodies on the floor. This excerpt is taken from the English version of Alejandrino's memoirs, "The Price of Freedom" (1949):

"Luna [was] a member of Congress. There he affiliated himself with the radical faction. This faction was formed almost spontaneously when the celebrated debates started in Congress over the separation of Church and State, the expulsion of the friars and other religious congregations from the Philippines, and the prohibition by the Constitution of the formation of new religious orders. The debates showed signs of dragging on forever because half of the members of Congress were adherents of the friars. Eloquent speeches from each group were pronounced but there never was a voting because both groups were afraid of the result of the balloting.

"Luna broke the situation with one of the tricks peculiar to his character and which made him famous later. He assembled all the delegates of the radical faction who had confidence in him advising them to keep away from the sessions of the Congress but requesting them to remain within call at a moment's notice. With the Radicals absent, the Conservatives constituted a majority during the sessions. Having made a careful counting and thinking themselves sure of victory, the Conservatives asked for a vote while the few Radicals present registered a token opposition. The motion to call a vote was carried. Then at the precise moment of balloting, Luna immediately called all his adherents to enter the session hall en masse, to the surprise of the confident Conservatives. The voting was taken and we won, if I remember right, by one or two votes. In this manner, the provision in our Constitution for the separation of Church and the State was secured."

The lack of quorum in both houses of Congress made me remember Luna and Barasoain well over a century ago. The absence or presence of the members of Congress makes or breaks history.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

Maharlika – Samu't Sari

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

PARENT LEADERSHIP
Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, left, Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Melvin Faisao and Saipan Mayor Donald Flores, right, applaud while press secretary Angel Demapan, standing, looks on right after Inos signed a proclamation declaring February 2010 Parent Leadership Month.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

CTE COURSES
PSS career and technical education program coordinator Jessica B. Taylor shares with members and guests of the Saipan Rotary Club meeting Tuesday the efforts initiated by the school system in the development and expansion of the Career and Technical Education program. The school system wants to partner with the private and business sector in further developing its course offerings.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

SPELLING CHAMPIONS
Mikhail T. Alcantara and Masrur Alam, center left and right, pose with the William S. Reyes Elementary School's spelling bee coordinators after winning the schoolwide competition on Jan. 26. The two will advance to the Scripps Spelling Competition in Guam next month. In photo are, from left, event coordinators Anthony Taylor, Jude Loste, Melissa Dickinson, vice principal Naomi Nishimura, and coordinator Claire Barcinas.

WAITING FOR SHOTS
William S. Reyes Elementary School students anxiously wait for their turn to receive free H1N1 flu vaccination from the Department of Public Health on their campus in Chalan Kanoa.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

A William S. Reyes Elementary School student reacts as his turn came to receive an H1N1 flu shot from the Department of Public Health on Jan. 29.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

William S. Reyes Elementary School students walk in formation to receive free H1N1 flu shots on Jan. 29 from Department of Public Health personnel.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Happy 14th birthday to Jacoby Jeremiah Atalig Fejeran! May your birthday bring you as much happiness as you give to everyone who knows you! From your family and friends.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Birthday greetings going out to Conseco John P. Arurang! Wishing you a wonderful and delightful day on your birthday. Greetings coming from your dad, mom, Hank, Chicko and rest of the family. We love you always.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PARTNERSHIP
Members of the newly formed Parent Teachers Leadership Council led by president John Sablan meet with Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan and other CNMI Public School System leaders last week to kick off the group's goal of helping PSS achieve its benchmarks on high student performance. Parent involvement and community partnership is one of the five priorities for PSS, and under the Strategic Priority Plus One, the CNMI-PSS leadership and the State Board of Education considers parents and the community as "advocates of student-classroom learning" and must be given focus.

Young Style

Try this!

© 2010 MCT
Source: Weekly Reader
Graphic: Paul Trap

Where does ice go?

Have you ever noticed that the ice sometimes disappears from the ice trays in a refrigerator even though no one has taken them? Here's why:

You'll need

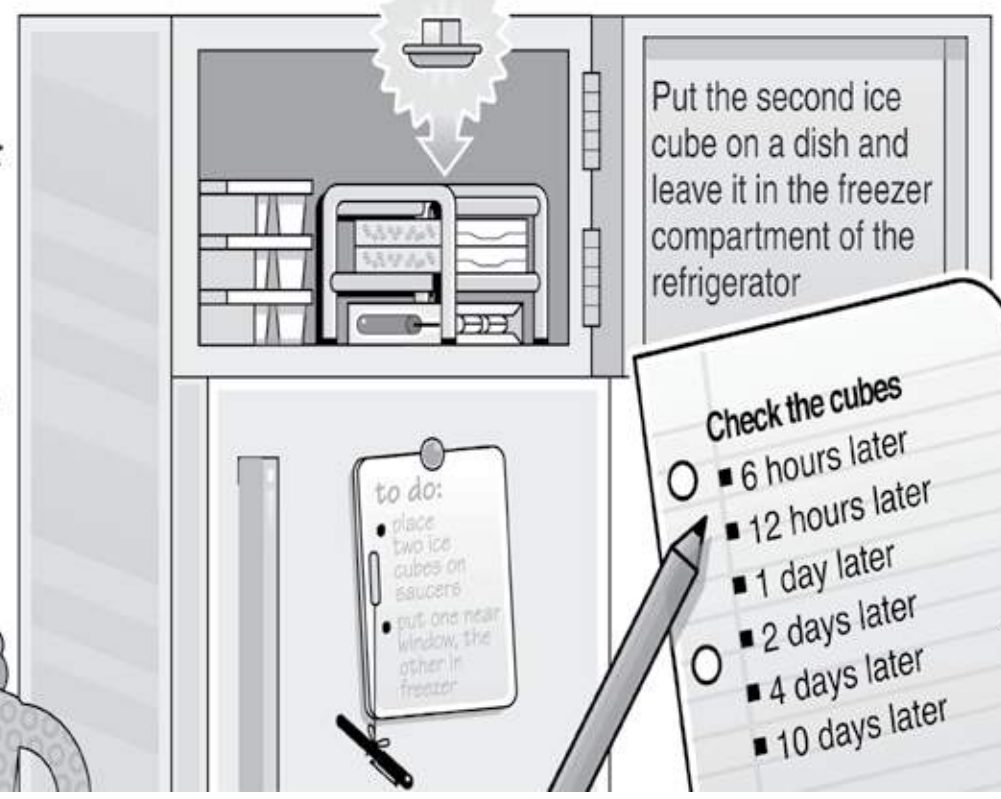
- ☐ Two small saucers
- ☐ Two ice cubes that are the same size
- ☐ Refrigerator
- ☐ Adult helper

Do this

1 Put one ice cube on a dish and leave it near a sunny window

Check with the adult to make sure the dish is on a waterproof surface that will not be damaged by moisture

Put the second ice cube on a dish and leave it in the freezer compartment of the refrigerator



What happened?

The ice cube near the window melted and became water, and then the water **evaporated** into the air and slowly disappeared; it turned into water vapor, which is transparent, like air; it was still there, but you just could not see it

The ice cube in the refrigerator never melted into water, but it also slowly disappeared

It **sublimated**, which means that it changed directly from a solid lump of frozen water to invisible water vapor

In cold weather, the ice on a frozen sidewalk sometimes sublimates; it never warms up and melts, but slowly disappears into the air

Try this!

© 2010 MCT
Source: Weekly Reader
Graphic: Paul Trap

Broken sunlight

A "prism" is a triangular piece of glass that can do interesting things to a beam of light. Here's a substitute for a prism that anyone can make:

You'll need

- ☐ Pan of water
- ☐ Small mirror
- ☐ White paper
- ☐ A clear, sunny day

NOTE: The mirror will get wet in this experiment and water can damage some mirrors, so ask an adult if it's OK to use the mirror you have chosen

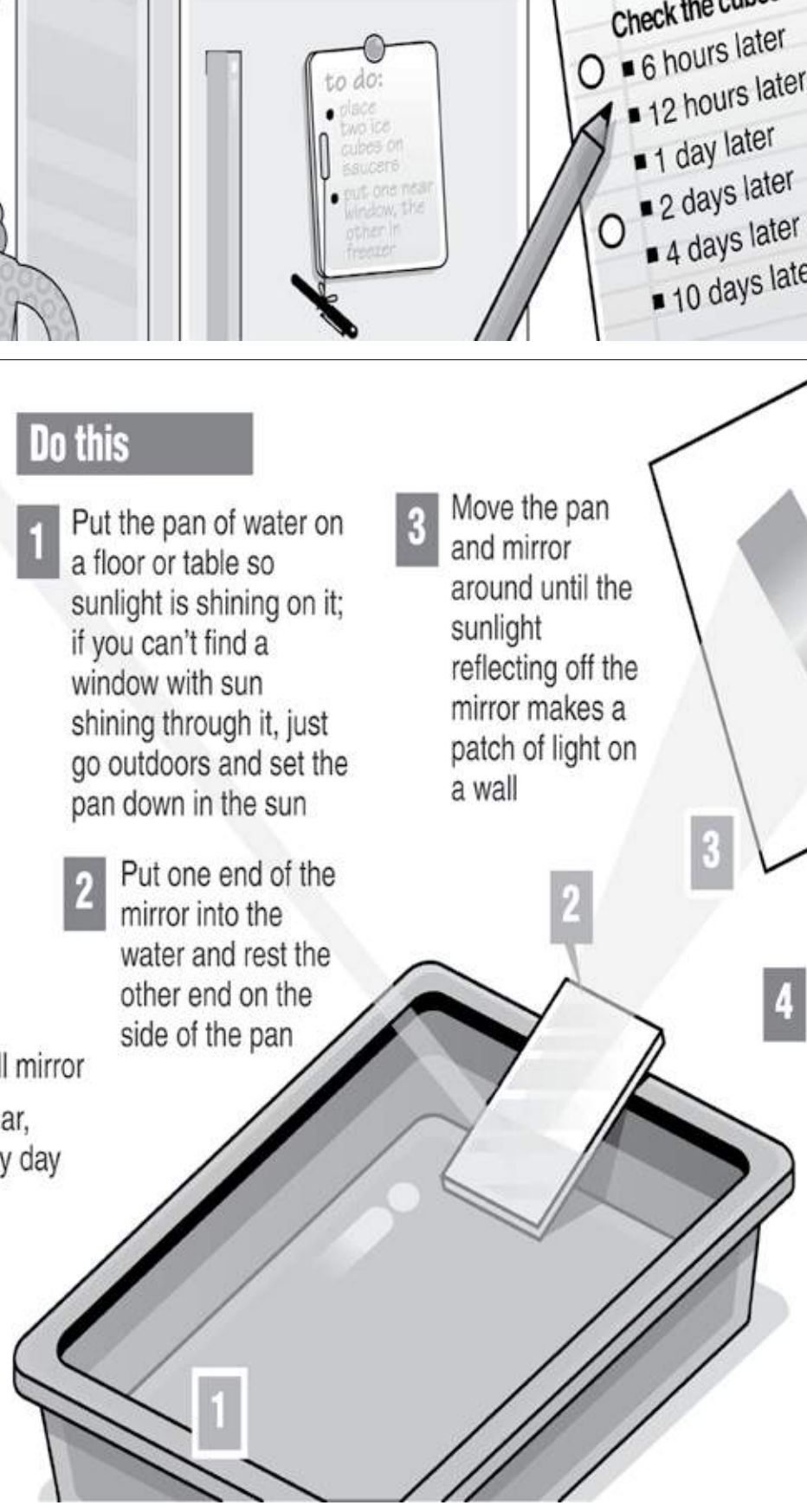
Do this

1 Put the pan of water on a floor or table so sunlight is shining on it; if you can't find a window with sun shining through it, just go outdoors and set the pan down in the sun

2 Put one end of the mirror into the water and rest the other end on the side of the pan

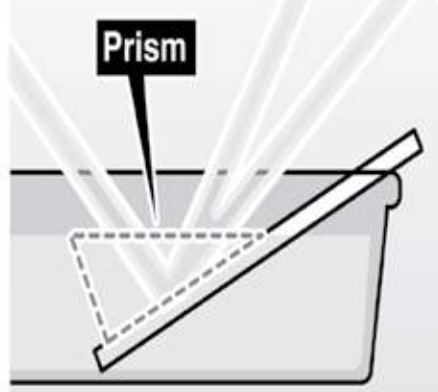
3 Move the pan and mirror around until the sunlight reflecting off the mirror makes a patch of light on a wall

4 Hold the white paper so that the patch of light shines on it and examine it closely; what do you see?



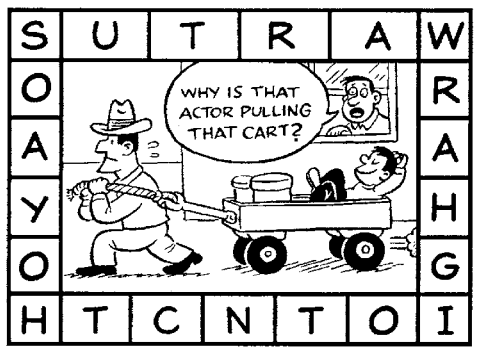
WHAT HAPPENED

White light – like the beam of sunlight – is actually a combination of all colors of light



When the sunlight bounced off your mirror, the wedge of water sitting on top of the glass did the same thing that a glass prism does

It "refracted" the sunlight and broke it down into the different colors of light



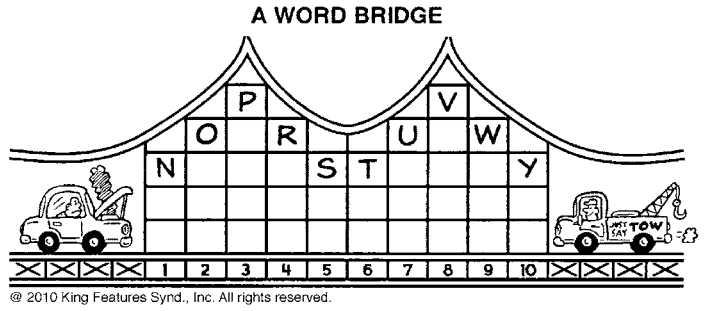
WHY INDEED? Hidden in the above frame is a famous old saying. You can find it by reading every other letter as you go around the frame clockwise. The trick is finding the right first letter

Answer: Starting with the "H" in the right rail: "Hitch your wagon to a star."

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

A WORD BRIDGE



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Illustrated by David Coulson

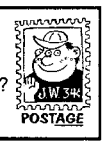
The bridge above contains 10 supporting words. We give you the first letter of each word, plus plenty of hints.

1. To scold constantly.
2. Long lyric poems.
3. Worn in winter.
4. A scraping tool.
5. A pair of foot warmers.
6. A male turkey.
7. To exhort or impel to action.
8. Courage and boldness in battle.
9. To join together.
10. A strong desire

Answers: 1. Nag. 2. Odes. 3. Parka. 4. Rasp. 5. Sox. 6. Tom. 7. Urge. 8. Valor. 9. Weld. 10. Yen.

"AGE" WORDS! Find the following words that end with "age."

1. What is a forest's age?
2. What age does a car hate?
3. What age is a bull in a china shop?
4. What age is an unplugged refrigerator?



Answers: 1. Foliage. 2. Mileage. 3. Rampage. 4. Spoilage.

IT'S MAGIC! Use the numbers 8 through 17 to fill in this Magic Number Square. The numbers in each horizontal row, and vertical column, and even the four corner squares, must total 65. We've fill in six of the squares. The rest is up to you. Use the trial-and-error method-- and a good eraser!

	18	24	
23			19
	26		
			25

[65]

Answers: First row: 15, 18, 24, 8. Second row: 23, 9, 14, 19. Third row: 10, 26, 16, 13. Fourth row: 17, 12, 11, 25.

Bad smell often indicates illness

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My dog "Scraps," an 8-year-old Lab-collie mix, has a rather embarrassing problem. He has a lot of smelly gas, and when he eliminates, well—his poo smells. Like, to the point that I have to look away when I pick it up because my eyes water. Is this normal? Is there a way to stop this?—Melanie T., via e-mail

DEAR MELANIE: You should take Scraps to the veterinarian for a complete checkup, and be sure to mention every delicate detail of his poop and his gassiness. Bring notes to help you remember, in particular: Does the smell have a particular odor? How often is Scraps gassy? Have you noticed a pattern between, for example, when he eats and when he gets gassy? Does his poop always smell? What color is it? Is it firm or runny? (Bring a small sample with you, in a plastic bag or specimen cup.)

The reason I want you to consult the vet first is that smelly elimination is often the first indicator of an illness. The illness may be minor and easy to treat or recover from, but it also may be more serious and need immediate medical attention. Only your vet can say for sure.

If Scraps' problem is not major, then the vet may recommend some changes in his diet. If he eats table scraps or gets into the garbage often, stop both of those behaviors. (Table scraps are often higher in fat than is recommended for pets, and garbage -- well, you may have no idea what he's ingesting.) A supplement or medication also might be recommended, and if Scraps has a weight problem, the vet will recommend a diet to help him shed a few pounds.

■ ■ ■

Send your pet questions to Sam Mazzotta at ask@pawscorner.com, or write to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. And find more pet resources at PawsCorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

■ It was American writer Cullen Hightower who made the following sage observation: "Laughing at our mistakes can lengthen our own life. Laughing at someone else's can shorten it."

■ If you were asked to name the northernmost of the United States, I'm sure you'd have no trouble naming Alaska. And you probably also know that Alaska is the westernmost state of the union. You might be surprised, however, to learn that Alaska is also the *easternmost* state. Yep. The Aleutian Island chain crosses the International Dateline, placing a few of the islands in the Far East.

■ Thanks to the fact that their eyes are placed on the sides of their heads, rabbits can see behind themselves without turning their heads.

■ In the town of Arcadia, Calif., there is a law on the books that grants peacocks the legal right of way when crossing any street or driveway.

■ Those who study such things claim that there are 293 different ways to make change for a dollar.

■ In 2002, a research firm conducted a poll on Americans' beliefs about the existence of alien life in the universe. It seems that a whopping 68 percent of us feel that the U.S. government knows about alien life but refuses to publicize that knowledge.

■ The Russian Space Agency has a full-fledged space tourism program—and a popular one, at that. Despite the $20 million price tag, all the available trips were fully booked by (wealthy) civilians in 2009.

■ If you and your spouse are like the average modern married couple, you spent more than $2,500 on photos and videos of your wedding.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "I look to the future because that's where I'm going to spend the rest of my life."—George Burns

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MAGIC MAZE ● — PARADE

G	O	L	J	G	M	D	A	X	V	S	P	N	K	I
F	C	A	X	V	U	S	Y	Q	O	L	J	S	H	E
C	A	T	X	V	M	T	R	T	M	P	U	N	L	J
H	F	D	E	B	M	V	K	Y	I	A	X	V	T	R
P	O	M	K	E	E	I	I	C	L	T	G	E	D	B
R	E	P	A	T	R	E	K	C	I	T	N	E	Z	X
W	E	Y	A	D	S	T	A	P	T	S	S	E	U	T
R	Q	T	O	N	L	T	S	T	A	O	Y	J	D	I
G	F	D	S	C	N	E	D	I	R	P	R	C	A	I
Y	X	W	V	A	T	S	R	H	Y	A	D	Y	A	M
P	O	N	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	L	K	J	I	M

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Easter, Flower, Hit, Identity, Macy's, May Day, Military, Mummers, Pride, Santa Claus, Sick, St. Pat's Day, Street, Ticker-tape, Victory

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	–		x		8
x		x		–	
	+		+		22
+		+		x	
	+		+		13
22		14		9	

1 2 3 4 5 6 8 8 9

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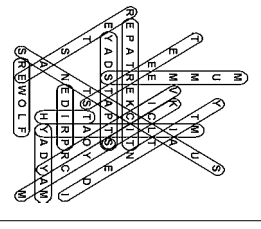
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



— PARADE

GO FIGURE ANSWER

	9		14		22
13	3	+	6	+	4
	x		+		+
22	5	+	8	+	9
	–		x		x
8	8	x	1	–	2

Slow cooker oatmeal makes mornings easy

It would be an apt description to call my husband a "musher" even though he has never trained, led or raced a dog team of huskies. Simply put, he likes to wake up on a chilly January morning to a hot pot of coffee and prepare a big, steaming bowl of homemade oatmeal, or what our family has called it for generations —"mush."

He makes the "mush" by dumping a cup of steel-cut oatmeal we buy for only 25 cents per cup in bulk at our neighborhood store into a cooking pot on the stove. He adds water, raisins and chopped fresh fruit, such as an apple or pear, and then tosses in a pinch of salt and cinnamon. It's ready to eat in about 30 minutes, just as he opens the sports section of the morning paper.

His has been a fine and dandy routine for years until he recently started a new job as an assistant superintendent of a school that starts in the wee hours of the morning, and is located on the opposite end of town from our home. The new early wake-up call prompted a happy discovery: slow-cooker oatmeal. Now he tosses the ingredients in our slow cooker the night before and sets it on low, and the healthy "mush" is hot and ready to enjoy the moment he wakes up. It's a "musher's" dream come true.

If your family knows and likes their oats, give this easy and super cheap version a try this winter:

For about 4 servings you'll need:

■ 1 cup steel-cut oats (not quick cooking or instant oats)
■ 3 cups water
■ a pinch of salt
■ Dried fruit to taste, such as apricots, raisins and cranberries
■ 1/2 cup chopped fresh fruit such as apple or pear
■ Cinnamon to taste (optional)

Here's the fun:

Let your kids measure and pour ingredients in the slow cooker before they go to bed. Stir, cover and set cooker at low heat.

In the morning, stir and serve. Vary toppings from day to day, such as brown sugar, cinnamon sugar, honey, nuts or chopped banana. Add milk if you wish.

ALTERNATIVE IDEA:

Try this recipe with your rice cooker if it has a porridge or cereal function that cooks oatmeal. Place ingredients in a bowl and refrigerate the night before. Pour contents into cooker in the morning, turn it on and it will cook on its own for about 25 minutes while the family gets dressed.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Life & Style

Coroner: Pneumonia killed Murphy, drugs played role

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Brittany Murphy, the star of "Clueless" and "8 Mile," died from pneumonia, with prescription drugs and anemia also playing a role, a coroner's official said Thursday.

The Dec. 20 death of the actress was accidental and likely could have been prevented if Murphy had seen a doctor sooner, Assistant Chief Coroner Ed Winter said.

He noted, however, that she did have an appointment scheduled with a physician a few days after she died.

Winter declined to specify what types of drugs were involved in her death and said further details would be released in several weeks when the report was completed.

He also said there was no evidence of wrongdoing.

Winter said Murphy's community-acquired pneumonia was serious and proved lethal when combined with the medications and iron deficiency anemia.

Murphy died at age 32 after collapsing in her Hollywood Hills home. Her mother and husband have said the actress didn't abuse prescription medications or have an eating disorder.

Murphy

Attempts to reach them for further comment were not immediately successful.

Murphy's husband, Simon Monjack, and her mother, Sharon Murphy, told investigators the actress had been experiencing flu-like symptoms in the days before she died.

Monjack told The Associated Press last month that his wife did take several prescriptions, including an anti-seizure drug, but did not abuse the medications.

He said she had been taking over-the-counter Robitussin for her recent sickness.

Dr. Michael Baden, a former chief medical examiner in New York City, said the quantities and type of drugs Murphy was taking were key to understanding how she died.

"One doesn't die of pneumonia, usually, that quickly," Baden said.

He said the use of some prescription medications can lead to pneumonia.

"It sounds more like it's a drug-related than a natural pulmonary pneumonia," said Baden, who did not work on the Murphy case but has served as an expert witness in numerous high-profile deaths.

Lawyer: Michael Jackson doctor to surrender Friday

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Michael Jackson's doctor has agreed to surrender to authorities Friday to face a criminal case stemming from the singer's death, his lawyer said Thursday.

Attorney Ed Chernoff said Dr. Conrad Murray agreed to turn himself in following discussions with the prosecutor handling the case. Details about how he would surrender were still being worked out.

"You tell us where; we'll be there," Chernoff said in a Thursday night posting on his Web site.

It was not immediately clear when Murray would be arraigned. Los Angeles County Sheriff's spokesman Steve Whitmore said it would not happen Friday.

Word that Murray would surrender came after a day of haggling between prosecutors, defense lawyers and law enforcement officials over whether the physician should be arrested or allowed to turn himself in.

Officials from the Los Angeles Police Department, which spent the past seven months investigating Murray, were unhappy with the idea of him surrendering and wanted to go to the residence he was staying at to arrest him, a law enforcement official close to the investigation told The Associated Press.

Various factors weighed into the desire to arrest Murray, including the possibility he might flee before arraignment, just as O.J. Simpson did, said the official, who was not authorized to speak publicly and requested anonymity. Police officials also worried it could appear Murray was being given special treatment if he was allowed to turn himself in.

Superstar farewell for US-born, China-bound pandas

WASHINGTON (AP)—They were treated like pop idols—except for being stuck in travel crates.

Adoring crowds and television viewers watched Thursday as American-born giant pandas Mei Lan and Tai Shan were loaded onto a special cargo jet for a flight to their new homes in China for breeding.

Normally placid, 3-year-old Mei Lan from Zoo Atlanta whirled and paced in her crate as flashbulbs popped. Tai Shan, a 4 1/2-year-old born in Washington, hid at first but was drawn into view as his longtime keepers at the National Zoo knelt silently at his crate to say goodbye, hand-feeding him slices of apples and pears.

One zookeeper wiped away tears. Federal police officers escorted Tai Shan to the airport, and FedEx workers transporting the pair buzzed around in "Panda Team" jackets to go with the huge panda emblem painted on their jet. News networks provided live coverage of the plane waiting on the tarmac and taking off.

As the Boeing 777's giant engines rumbled to life, tears started to flow for panda lover Mara Strock of Burke, Va., who looked on with other invited guests.

AP

Nicole Meese feeds giant panda Tai Shan on a cargo plane at Dulles International Airport in Chantilly, Va., Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010, before heading to China.

"I love Tai Shan so much, I don't know how I'm going to handle it," she said, watching the plane pull away.

Clutching a stuffed black-and-white bear, 10-year-old Caleigh Davis of Springfield, Va., said she was sad to see Tai Shan go but glad he could go with his cousin.

"The thing I'm most afraid of is that he's going to eat too much food," she said, "and have a sick stomach."

Millions of people fell in love with the pandas as star attractions in zoo exhibits and by watching them grow up via online panda cams. And in Washington, the animals have a particularly long and symbolic history.

The first panda couple at the National Zoo, Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing, arrived in 1972 as a gift to the American people from China after President Richard Nixon's historic visit.

The pair lived more than 20 years at the zoo and produced five cubs—but none survived. That's partly why Tai Shan, the first cub to grow up in the nation's capital, is so adored.

Pandas may be China's most compelling ambassadors as the country clashes with the U.S. on many issues, including trade, human rights and Internet security. Tai Shan's departure gave diplomats a rare moment of harmony.

"He is a tangible, and furry, manifestation of cooperation between the United States and China," U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said Thursday.

Xie Feng, minister of the Chinese Embassy, said Tai Shan "has grown up with the blessing, love and care of the American people."

"He has now grown into a handsome young man, and it's time for him to go home," he said.

China lent Tai Shan's and Mei Lan's parents to U.S. zoos for conservation, and now they will become part of a breeding program in their endangered species' native land. About 1,600 giant pandas live in the wild, and another 290 are in captive-breeding programs worldwide, mainly in China.

Mei Lan, the first cub born at Zoo Atlanta in 2006, could be seen pacing back and forth when her steel crate was driven out onto the Atlanta tarmac and past a row of television cameras.

Mei Lan's parents, Lun Lun and Yang Yang, had a second cub—Xi Lan, a male born in 2008. Zoo officials in Washington are hoping for another cub as well.

For animal keeper Nicole Meese, Tai Shan's departure is personal. He was a baby when she first held him, and she later spent late nights calling him down from trees. Now she's traveling with him to ease the transition, ready to teach his Chinese keepers the hand signals he uses.

"Every day, he makes me smile," she said.

IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE

Osubed Anna Delong

Born on August 27, 1922
Passed away in
the grace of our Lord
on January 31, 2010

Her remains will be escorted from CHC Morgue to Tanapag Church at 8:00am, followed by public viewing at 8:30am.

Mass will be celebrated at 11:00am, followed by interment services at Tanapag Cemetary.

Your prayers are greatly appreciated.

Thank you
Family

Coroner: Casey Johnson's death diabetes related

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Socialite Casey Johnson died of a complication of diabetes, the Los Angeles County coroner said Thursday.

Johnson, 30, an heir to the Johnson & Johnson health care products fortune, died of diabetic ketoacidosis, the coroner said in a brief statement. Diabetic ketoacidosis is a life-threatening condition caused by lack of insulin and sky-high blood sugar.

An autopsy was conducted Jan. 5, a day after Johnson's body was found at her home. The coroner's office said it would not be able to discuss specifics until the autopsy report and toxicology results become available within two weeks.

Dr. Michael Baden, former chief medical examiner in New York City, said Johnson probably slipped into a diabetic coma, but people can usually be resuscitated from that in the first 24 hours.

"If you have somebody with diabetes, there should be somebody checking up on that person," said Baden, who has been an expert witness in cases involving the late comedian John Belushi and former pro football star O.J. Simpson.

Johnson

A message left for a family spokesman was not immediately returned.

Johnson, the daughter of New York Jets owner Robert "Woody" Johnson, lived a party life. In December, she announced her engagement to bisexual reality TV star Tila Tequila.

Her body was flown east for a private funeral.

Johnson had been an insulin-dependent diabetic since childhood. A memorial fund in her name was set up with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Her father is chairman of that organization and co-author of the book "Managing Your Child's Diabetes."

Casey Johnson lived in a quiet neighborhood behind big wooden gates marked "Grumblenot," but she often partied with high school friend and fellow heiress Paris Hilton.

Johnson was charged in December with burglary and receiving stolen property for allegedly taking $22,000 in clothing, jewelry and other items from a friend's home. She pleaded not guilty and faced a February hearing.

She is survived by her parents, two younger sisters, and an adopted child she named Ava-Monroe, after her idol, Marilyn Monroe.

Label chief defends Swift's Grammy performance

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The head of Taylor Swift's record label is fired up and defending his superstar against critical comments about her Grammy-night performance.

"She is the voice of this generation. She speaks directly to (her fans), and they speak directly back to her," said Big Machine Records CEO Scott Borchetta in a phone interview. "This is not 'American Idol.' This is not a competition of getting up and seeing who can sing the highest note. This is about a true artist and writer and communicator. It's not about that technically perfect performance."

Borchetta first responded to the backlash in an interview with The Tennessean. Asked by The Associated Press why he felt the need to defend Swift, he said because the criticism was "just over the top."

"It's that classic thing that critics do of building something up and then wanting to tear it down," he said.

Swift rehearsed her performance and duet with Stevie Nicks two different times at the Staples Center in Los Angeles in front of an audience. Entertainment Weekly wrote of the rehearsal, "The two women's voices complemented each other nicely on the harmonies of 'Rhiannon.'"

AP

Taylor Swift, left, and Stevie Nicks perform at the Grammy Awards on Sunday, Jan. 31, 2010, in Los Angeles.

But on Sunday night's Grammy show, Borchetta said Swift had a technical issue that made her worry about her performance. (Attempts to reach The Recording Academy for comment went unanswered.)

"We had a volume problem in the ear. So, she was concerned that she wasn't able to hear everything in the mix," Borchetta said. "That's just part of live TV. ... So you're going to have difficulties on occasion. Unfortunately, on one of the biggest stages, we did have a technical issue. She couldn't hear herself like she had in rehearsal."

As quickly as you could say "Fearless," bloggers and media outlets pounced on Swift's performance. The Washington Post quipped: "To borrow a phrase from Montgomery Burns, it was more 'off-key caterwauling.'" EW.com said: "There's no doubt that someone was badly off-key. ... I'm afraid my money's on Taylor."

The chatter at times overshadowed the four Grammys Swift had won, including album of the year.

Miranda Kerr: Banker shouldn't lose job over photo

SYDNEY (AP)—Miranda Kerr says an Australian banker left red-faced when a live TV broadcast showed him looking at her scantily clad photos at work shouldn't be fired.

Macquarie Bank worker Dave Kiely was at his desk as a colleague was being interviewed about interest rates when the camera showed him apparently opening e-mail attachments of nearly nude photos of the model.

The clip became a YouTube hit and other media broadcast it during prime-time Tuesday. Macquarie Bank said it was investigating, and Kiely is expected to meet with his bosses soon to learn his fate. Kerr, a 26-year-old Australian-born model engaged to "Pirates of the Caribbean" star Orlando Bloom, said she hoped the banker would not lose his job.

"I am told there is a petition to save his job, and of course I would sign it," news.com.au quoted her as saying.

London-based financial news-based Web site Here is the City set up an e-mail campaign to help Kiely, saying he should not get fired because he has suffered enough and the pictures weren't hardcore porn.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Cybill Shepherd's son in Pa. court on theft charge

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Cybill Shepherd's son has appeared in court in Philadelphia on charges he stole money and other items from fellow airline passengers. Cyrus Shepherd-Oppenheim is a University of Pennsylvania student from Sebastopol, Calif. Police say he stole cash, a camera and other items from carry-on luggage during a cross-country United Airlines flight last month. A judge Thursday set an April 20 trial date on theft and related charges. Defense lawyer William J. Brennan says similar cases often end with a pretrial diversion program. He says it appears the two victims left the flight with all their belongings. The 22-year-old Shepherd-Oppenheim is the son of the "Moonlighting" star and her ex-husband, chiropractor Bruce Oppenheim.

'Days of Our Lives' star Frances Reid dies at 95

NEW YORK (AP)—NBC says Frances Reid, who played matriarch Alice Horton on "Days of Our Lives" for four decades, has died in Los Angeles. She was 95. The network says Reid died Wednesday. She was among the original cast of the daytime soap opera, which premiered in 1965. Reid starred opposite Macdonald Carey, who played her husband until his death in 1994. Her final appearance as a regular was in 2007. Reid made appearances on episodic TV and other soaps including "As the World Turns." In the 1950s, she performed on anthologies such as "Studio One" and "Philco Television Playhouse" during what is recalled as TV's Golden Age. Reid received the Daytime Emmys' Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004. She was born in Wichita Falls, Texas, in 1914.

Sire Records founder testifies in NYC murder trial

NEW YORK (AP)—Sire Records founder Seymour Stein is helping Manhattan prosecutors detail his ex-wife's last day alive—and the activities of the personal assistant accused of murdering her. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member testified at Natavia Lowery's trial Thursday that he spoke briefly to his former spouse, Linda Stein, at 10:16 a.m. on Oct. 30, 2007. He said when he called Stein again six hours later, Lowery answered and said she was out running. Prosecutors say she actually was dead after a beating by Lowery. Lowery denies killing Stein, a real estate broker who had co-managed the Ramones. Seymour Stein says testifying marked "a very sad day for me." He's known for signing such acts as Madonna and the Talking Heads.

Springsteen wants name off lawsuit against NYC bar

NEW YORK (AP)—Bruce Springsteen wants his name off a lawsuit demanding licensing fees from a Manhattan bar where a band played his songs. A statement on Springsteen's Web site Thursday said he didn't know about the lawsuit that was filed Wednesday in federal court and wouldn't have agreed to be a plaintiff if he had been asked. It says Springsteen's representatives demanded the immediate removal of his name Thursday morning after learning about the lawsuit filed by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. ASCAP didn't immediately return a telephone call seeking comment Thursday night. The suit claims Connolly's Pub violated Springsteen's copyrights by letting an unidentified band perform two of his songs for profit. A man who answered the phone at Connolly's said the pub had no comment.

Kenny Rogers to mark 50 years in music on TV

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Country music veteran Kenny Rogers is marking 50 years in the music business with a star-studded TV special. The 71-year-old says the "whole idea is to get together with some friends" to celebrate. He doesn't want it to be a tribute. Friends including Dolly Parton, Allison Krauss, Lionel Richie, and Wynonna Judd are already signed on for "Kenny Rogers- The First 50 Years." It will tape on April 10 at the MGM Grand At Foxwoods in Connecticut. The network airing the special will be announced later. The special will take viewers through the six decades of Rogers' hits, including "The Gambler," "Lucille," and the Dolly Parton duet "Islands In The Stream." Entertainers who have known Rogers throughout the years will host segments of the show.

Teen reluctant to disappoint mom with a change of plan

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am a 16-year-old girl who is starting to seriously consider colleges and plan for the future. I found an amazing school close to home that I'd love to attend—but there's a problem.

Two years ago, after much thought and consideration, I decided I wanted to be a doctor. My mother completely supported my choice and was more than a little happy about it.

I recently accepted a position as a tutor, and now I realize that I love being able to teach children and help them with their studies. The college I want to attend is a teaching college, not a school for premed studies.

I am confident in my decision to become a teacher, but I'm afraid my mother will be disappointed and upset that I no longer want to be a doctor. How can I tell her that my dreams have changed?

E.D. NOT M.D. IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR E.D.: This is something that should be discussed with your guidance counselor at school. You set your goal of obtaining a medical degree when you were only 14. While your aspirations of becoming a teacher are admirable, it is possible that once you reach college and are exposed to a broader range of intellectual opportunities your goal may change again. This is why many college students declare their major upon completing their sophomore year.

As to talking about this to your mother, remember that careers in medicine and education have some things in common—among them dedication and determination. So start practicing now.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My best friend and I are talented artists. She receives a lot of attention for her work. She sells whenever she wants to, shows her work in New York and teaches at a prestigious school.

I have many successes in my career, but I have had to work very hard for everything. She hasn't. I am beginning to resent it because I'm growing exhausted from trying to accomplish my dreams.

I have also noticed that on occasions when I have asked my friend for help, she hasn't followed through. I am starting to conclude that she doesn't respect me. I must admit that the amount of attention she gets for her work frosts me.

Is there a chance to save this friendship, or should we part ways? Or, am I too selfish and jealous?

TALENTED ARTIST IN CANADA

DEAR TALENTED ARTIST: Let me put it this way—unless you are able to find it within yourself to forgive your friend for her success, then I doubt your friendship will continue much further.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My birthday is in two months, and it's a "big" one. As of today, two people—a close friend and my mother—felt the need to tell me that "someone" has planned a surprise birthday party for me.

I am disgusted that they spoiled the surprise. Why would someone want to take the joy out of something that way? I will do my best to act surprised, but it won't be the same.

Abby, please tell your readers they are doing a disservice by doing this. It is not, in my opinion, the behavior of a true friend

BIRTHDAY GIRL-TO-BE IN GEORGIA

DEAR BIRTHDAY GIRL-TO-BE: I'll pass along your message, but as your experience shows—some people just CAN'T keep a secret. Just as you wouldn't put water into a pitcher that leaks, it's a mistake to confide your secrets in the Town Crier. If there is an upside to this, it's that you know there are two of them in your life and who they are. Mum's the word!

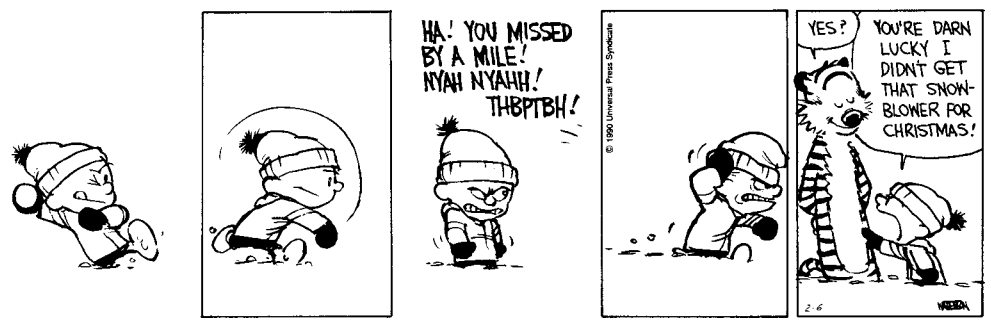
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby – Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


HA! YOU MISSED BY A MILE! NYAH NYAHH! THBPTBH!
© 1990 Universal Press Syndicate
YES?
YOU'RE DARN LUCKY I DIDN'T GET THAT SNOW-BLOWER FOR CHRISTMAS!
2-6

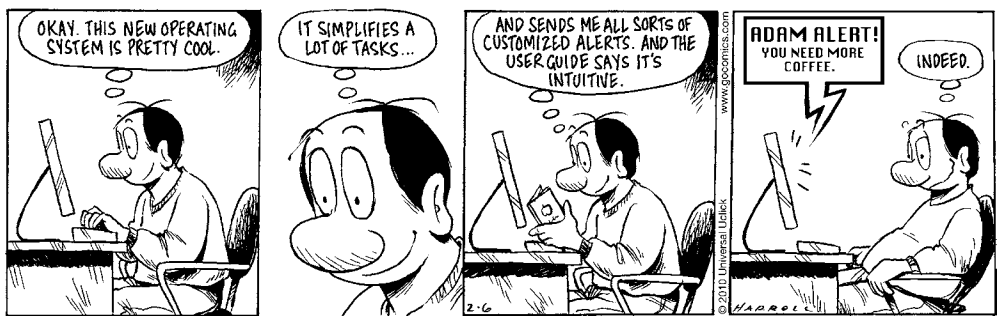
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

MAYBE JON WOULD TREAT ME NICER...
JIM DAVIS 2-6
© 2010 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.
www.garfield.com
IF I TREATED HIM NICER
OR, I COULD JUST FAKE AN INJURY
YOU OKAY, PAL?
Distributed by Universal Uclick

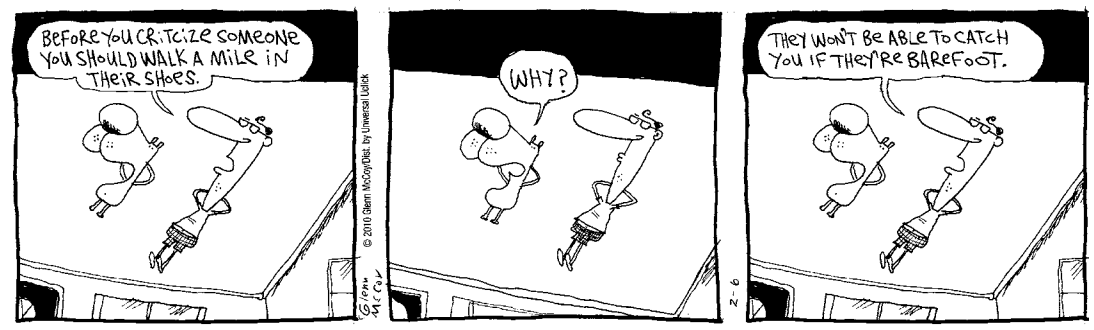
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


OKAY. THIS NEW OPERATING SYSTEM IS PRETTY COOL.
IT SIMPLIFIES A LOT OF TASKS...
AND SENDS ME ALL SORTS OF CUSTOMIZED ALERTS. AND THE USER GUIDE SAYS IT'S INTUITIVE.
ADAM ALERT! YOU NEED MORE COFFEE.
INDEED.
www.gocomics.com
©2010 Universal Uclick
2-6

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


BEFORE YOU CRITICIZE SOMEONE YOU SHOULD WALK A MILE IN THEIR SHOES.
© 2010 Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Uclick
WHY?
THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO CATCH YOU IF THEY'RE BAREFOOT.
2-6

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

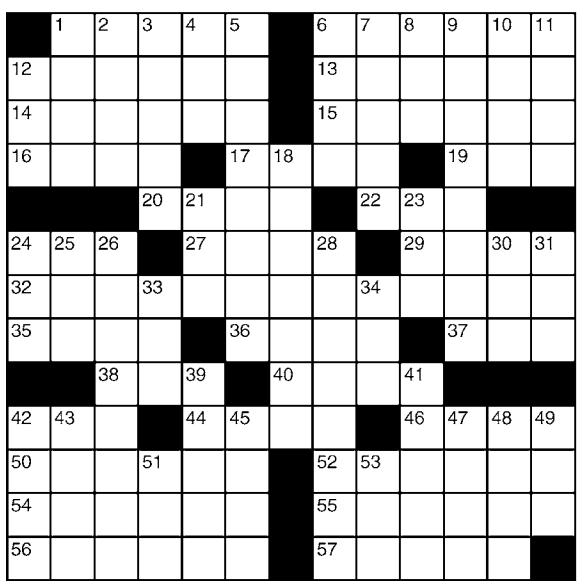
ACROSS
1 Courage
6 Way out
12 Merry
13 End a shutdown
14 Ancient
15 Spectrum member
16 Maximum
17 Finished
19 Part of D.J.I.A
20 Paddock papa
22 Language suffix
24 Mimic
27 Prohibits
29 Early pulpit
32 HBO series made into a 2008 movie
35 Leftovers recipe
36 Change for a five
37 — -de-sac
38 Genetics abbr.
40 Approximately
42 Moment
44 Wrap (around)
46 Dermatology case
50 Emergency
52 Bandit
54 Guarantee
55 Fold
56 Paging device
57 In a way

DOWN
1 "Forget it"
2 Prior nights
3 Urban disturbances
4 Actor Kilmer
5 Site of great wealth
6 Canal zone?
7 Category
8 Scepter
9 Widespread illness
10 Lily variety
11 Winter forecast
12 Predicament
18 One of the yellow Monopoly properties
21 Arabic "son of"
23 Pouch
24 Donkey
25 Favorite
26 Calisthenics
28 Skilled sleuth
30 A/C meas.
31 Popeye's Olive
33 Botanical bristle
34 Curvaceous character
39 Burning
41 Like Cheerios
42 Wound cover
43 Gaelic
45 Addict
47 Dressed
48 Houston acronym
49 Ram's fan?
51 Dine
53 Spoonbender Geller

Solution time: 27 mins.

S	P	A	■	G	A	G	A	■	L	O	C	O
O	R	B	■	E	G	A	D	■	O	D	O	R
D	O	C	K	Y	A	R	D	■	G	E	N	E
A	S	S	I	S	T	■	E	L	I	■	■	■
■	■	■	L	E	E	■	D	O	C	K	E	T
R	A	Z	O	R	■	M	U	G	■	H	U	H
A	N	I	S	■	P	I	P	■	T	A	R	O
I	N	N	■	W	A	X	■	D	O	N	O	R
D	O	C	T	O	R	■	L	O	T	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	K	A	■	O	N	E	D	G	E
W	H	I	R	■	D	O	C	U	M	E	N	T
A	U	T	O	■	E	R	A	T	■	L	A	C
N	E	S	T	■	S	A	L	S	■	E	T	H

Yesterday's answer 2-6



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Axl Rose, 48; Kathy Najimy, 53; Natalie Cole, 60; Tom Brokaw, 70

Happy Birthday: If you make choices based on your emotions, not practicality and reality, you will pay the price. Focus on the long-term effects. Don't let a bad relationship or friendship be your downfall. Rid yourself of whatever is holding you back. Invite the positive into your life, pushing negativity away. Your numbers are 6, 9, 17, 20, 24, 36, 45

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Budget and spend wisely and it will lead to good fortune and opportunities in the future. Be smart about your plans and don't venture over and above what you can handle emotionally, financially or professionally. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): If someone tries to make you feel small or avoids telling you the truth, move on quickly. Giving in to someone who does not have your best interests at heart will slow down any attempt you make to get ahead. Cut old ties and make new ones. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Act fast and spare yourself the grief of losing out. The ability to do the unexpected and to stay ahead of the competition will lead you to victory. Love is apparent but likely to have unwanted attachments. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Take control of your life and your future by putting more into your talents and skills. You have more to offer than you realize, so put your talents to work. You will achieve the peace and happiness you are constantly in search of. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Think before you do something you may regret. Taking on too much or overdoing, overspending or overindulging will lead to heartache and setbacks. Stay busy and avoid meddling or being manipulated. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You may not like the idea of change but, in this case, it will bring about an interesting situation that you don't want to miss. An unexpected alteration in your living conditions will lead to opportunities. Embrace the new. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Snap decisions are not always easy for you to make but, this time, they will be to your benefit. A chance to engage in an interesting partnership with someone you meet will lead to a new beginning. Rely on your imagination. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Holding on to the past or remaining in the same location are not to your benefit. A fresh new start may be daunting at first but, it won't take long to see the possibilities available. Travel will result in greater opportunities. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You may have to shake things up a bit if you want to get anything done. Showing an effort will help you avoid a sudden misfortune. Protect your future by ensuring that your reputation is based on positive hard work and consistency. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Learn from your mistakes or prepare to repeat the lesson. A burden or responsibility will be sent your way. How you handle it will be a sign of what's to come. Do not lose sight of your own goals. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Be careful not to let someone take advantage of your kindness and generosity. Demand to be treated equally. A change in your lifestyle will ensure you are treated fairly. Get rid of habits that hold you back. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Focus on moneymaking deals. Invest in something you believe in that is unique and offers a service that is in demand. Don't be afraid to branch out in an altogether new direction. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are emotional, sensitive and drawn to the unusual. You take whatever journey is required to learn your life lessons. You are unique, creative and a strong advocate of justice and fair play.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	3		6			4		2
6		8						
	9		7					1
5		7	1					
					9	2		5
8					4		3	
						6		4
4		6			1		7	

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/06

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	4	2	6	5	1	9	7	8
9	7	6	3	8	4	2	5	1
5	1	8	7	2	9	3	6	4
6	8	3	2	4	5	1	9	7
7	5	4	9	1	3	8	2	6
2	9	1	8	6	7	4	3	5
8	3	7	1	9	6	5	4	2
4	2	9	5	7	8	6	1	3
1	6	5	4	3	2	7	8	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/05

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

BORA BORA **Solution: 8 letters**

A	I	S	E	N	Y	L	O	P	A	L	M	S	H	Y
R	F	E	P	M	O	T	U	N	A	M	E	T	O	R
T	B	R	E	A	T	H	T	A	K	I	N	G	N	O
I	L	E	E	A	F	P	E	R	F	E	C	T	E	T
F	A	D	X	N	G	O	A	C	R	A	D	N	Y	I
A	C	E	L	C	C	N	L	R	I	N	I	F	M	R
C	K	V	U	W	U	H	I	K	A	L	D	E	O	R
T	P	L	S	A	I	R	I	L	L	S	E	E	O	E
S	E	E	H	T	D	T	S	A	E	O	A	R	N	T
U	A	B	T	E	E	I	T	I	C	K	R	I	S	O
N	R	R	Y	R	B	S	V	B	O	O	R	E	L	U
R	L	O	M	O	Y	S	N	I	L	N	R	O	S	R
I	L	C	O	R	A	Y	S	U	N	U	E	A	N	I
S	A	K	C	C	I	N	E	C	S	G	E	M	L	S
E	F	A	B	U	C	S	N	I	A	T	N	U	O	M

© 2010 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com 2/6

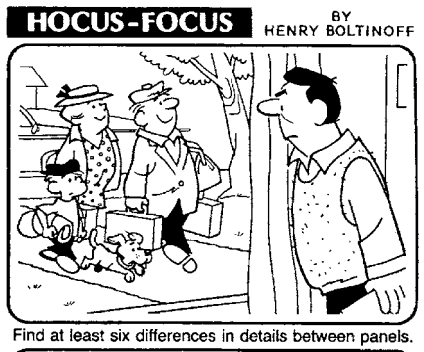
Artifacts, Belvedere, Black Pearl, Blue, Book, Breathtaking, Coral, Crystalline, Diving, Excursion, Fall, Folklores, French, Gem, Honeymoons, Island, Lush, Motu, Mountains, Myths, Otemanu, Palms, Parasail, Perfect, Polynesia, Rays, Reef, Relic, Rock, Scenic, Scuba, Snorkeling, Sunrise, Sunsets, Territory, Tiki, Tourism, Water

Yesterday's Answer: Satirist

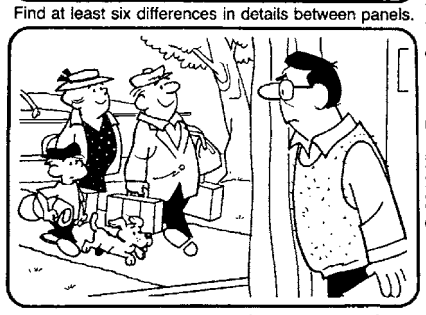
Treasury 8 can be ordered by sending check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 postage and handling each ($14.20 total each, U.S. funds only) for the first volume, $1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Universal Uclick, Attn: Wonderword, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Dress is different. 2. Man has glasses. 3. Tree is wider. 4. Suitcase is different. 5. House is gone. 6. Dog's collar is missing.

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Wishing Well®

4	7	3	2	6	3	4	7	6	8	5	7	6
F	B	B	B	Y	E	O	E	O	W	L	P	U
5	8	6	3	5	8	7	3	7	4	6	7	4
O	R	R	A	V	A	E	L	R	R	R	S	G
5	6	4	5	2	5	4	6	4	6	5	3	7
E	A	E	O	R	F	A	D	H	I	R	E	I
2	3	8	6	3	7	5	8	2	6	7	6	7
E	A	P	A	D	S	E	U	A	N	T	C	E
2	7	6	8	3	4	2	5	8	2	7	6	4
K	N	E	P	E	E	B	S	L	A	T	S	A
8	5	2	8	5	3	6	8	4	8	2	5	8
O	E	D	O	A	R	H	S	D	E	H	R	E
2	8	2	5	2	5	6	2	6	2	6	8	8
A	N	B	C	I	H	O	T	W	S	S	D	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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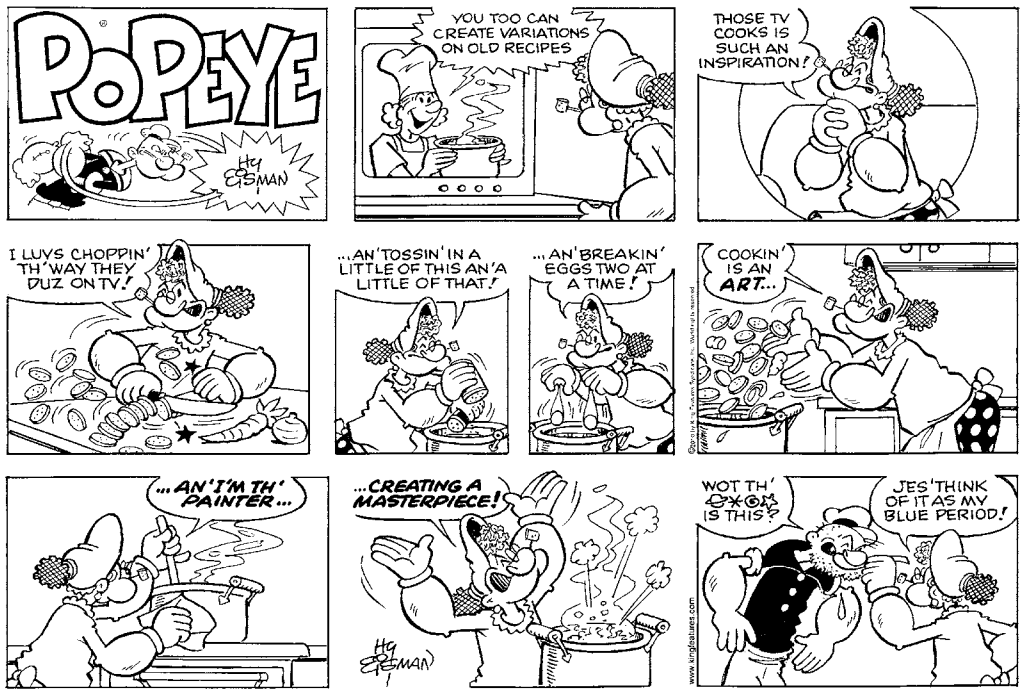
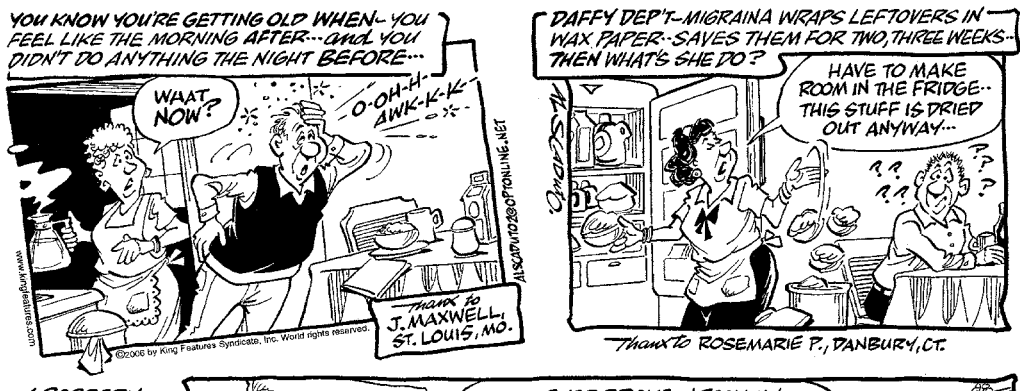

POPEYE
Hy EISMAN
YOU TOO CAN CREATE VARIATIONS ON OLD RECIPES
THOSE TV COOKS IS SUCH AN INSPIRATION!
I LUVS CHOPPIN' TH' WAY THEY DUZ ON TV!
...AN'TOSSIN' IN A LITTLE OF THIS AN'A LITTLE OF THAT!
...AN'BREAKIN' EGGS TWO AT A TIME!
COOKIN' IS AN ART...
...AN'I'M TH' PAINTER...
...CREATING A MASTERPIECE!
WOT TH' IS THIS?
JES'THINK OF IT AS MY BLUE PERIOD!
www.kingfeatures.com

They'll Do It Every Time — by Al Scaduto


YOU KNOW YOU'RE GETTING OLD WHEN-- YOU FEEL LIKE THE MORNING AFTER--and YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING THE NIGHT BEFORE...
WAAT NOW?
-O-OH-H-AWK-K-K-K-
Thanx to J.MAXWELL, ST. LOUIS, MO.
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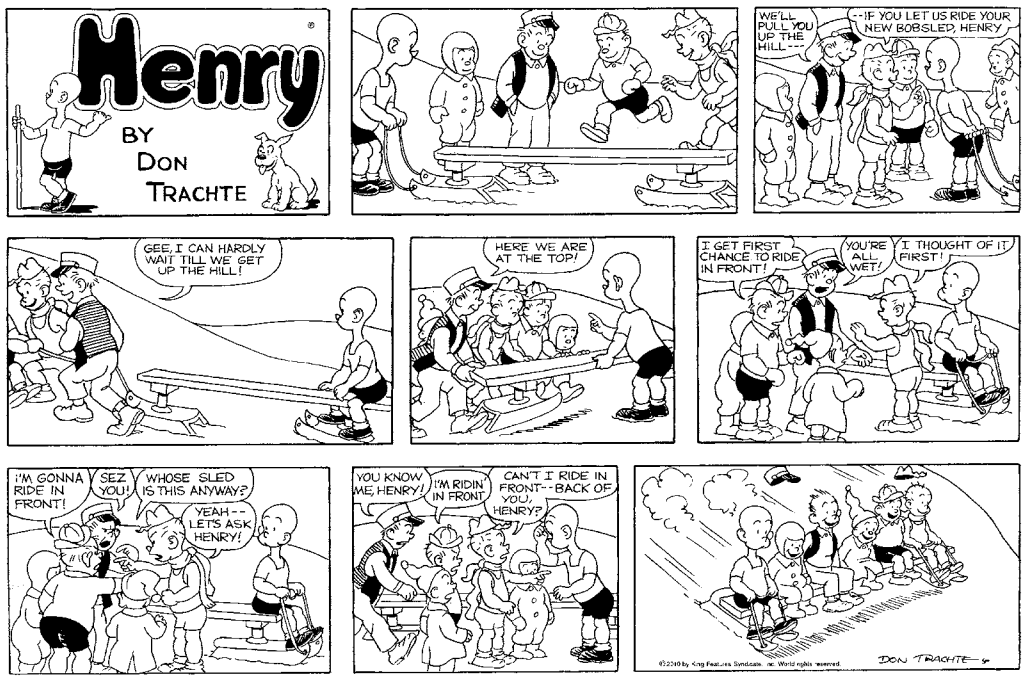
DAFFY DEP'T--MIGRAINA WRAPS LEFTOVERS IN WAX PAPER--SAVES THEM FOR TWO, THREE WEEKS--THEN WHAT'S SHE DO?
HAVE TO MAKE ROOM IN THE FRIDGE-- THIS STUFF IS DRIED OUT ANYWAY...
Thanx to ROSEMARIE P., DANBURY, CT.
A ROBBERY-- and IT'S ALWAYS A MILLION BUCKS' WORTH OF LOOT THAT'S BEEN TAKEN, TO HEAR THE VICTIM TELL IT---
Thanx to A.CUMINGS, PORTLAND, ORE.
WHOEVER BROKE IN TOOK MY $10,000 NECKLACE AND MY FUR COAT THAT'S WORTH $12,000 AND MY VERY FINE SILVERWARE--AND ETC., ETC.--


Henry
BY DON TRACHTE
WE'LL PULL YOU UP THE HILL---
-IF YOU LET US RIDE YOUR NEW BOBSLED, HENRY
GEE, I CAN HARDLY WAIT TILL WE GET UP THE HILL!
HERE WE ARE AT THE TOP!
I GET FIRST CHANCE TO RIDE IN FRONT!
YOU'RE ALL WET!
I THOUGHT OF IT FIRST!
I'M GONNA RIDE IN FRONT!
SEZ YOU!
WHOSE SLED IS THIS ANYWAY?
YEAH-- LET'S ASK HENRY!
YOU KNOW ME, HENRY!
I'M RIDIN' IN FRONT.
CAN'T I RIDE IN FRONT--BACK OF YOU, HENRY?
DON TRACHTE

Super Crossword

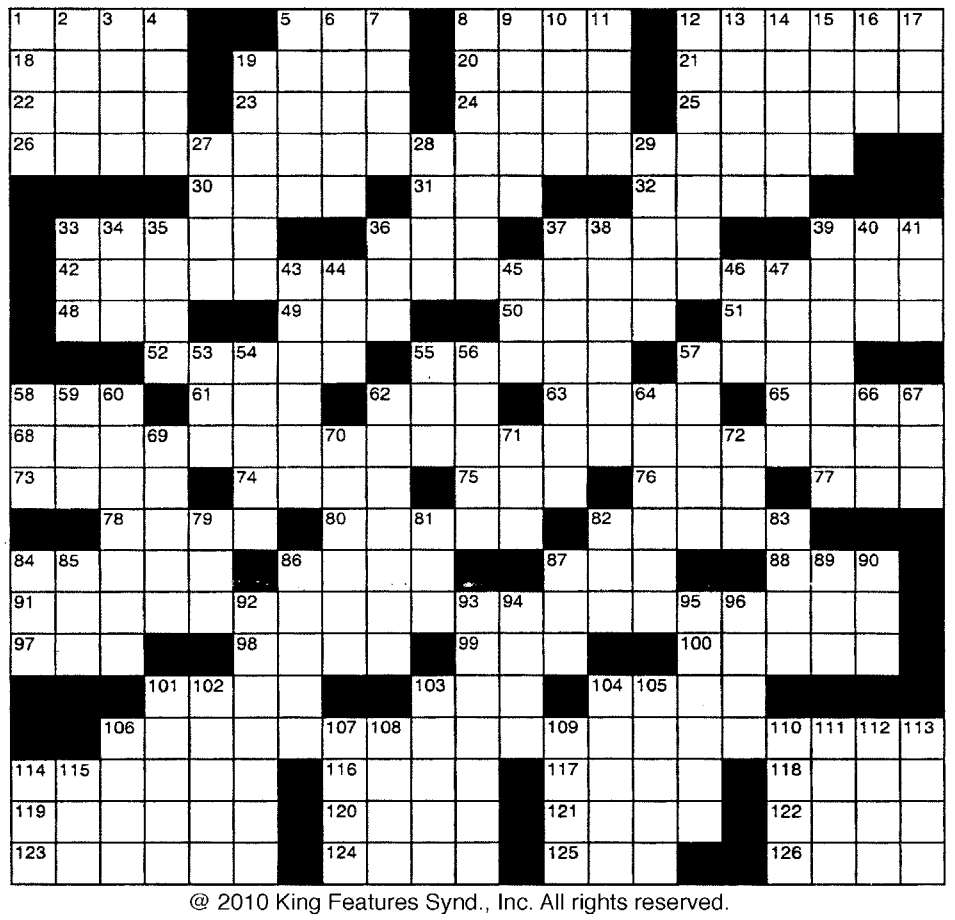
WISHFUL THINKING

ACROSS

1 Velvety burrower
5 Welcome item?
8 Belfry sound
12 Most rational
18 In the course of
19 Actor Auberjonois
20 Betting setting
21 "Electric —" ('83 hit)
22 Sitarist Shankar
23 TV's "The — of Night"
24 Toast topper
25 Elastic band
26 My doctor told me . . .
30 Chip's chum
31 Made one's mark
32 Cry of disgust
33 Salivate
36 Slangy sib
37 Burn
39 AAA handout
42 My dentist told me . . .
48 Ending for "auction"
49 Pitch in
50 Wrath
51 Stationed
52 It's out of this world
55 Clouts a cad
57 Milk measurement
58 Arthur or Pons
61 Cockpit fig.
62 Stephen of "The Crying Game"
63 Bishop of Rome
65 Summer top
68 My mechanic told me . . .
73 Thousand —, CA
74 Jeremy Fisher, for one
75 Scand. nation
76 — Tome
77 Giovanni or Rickles
78 Rotisserie part
80 Jeeves' profession
82 Sitcom set in Nantucket
84 Shun
86 Quick snack
87 Hold the title
88 "— Gotta Be Me" ('69 hit)
91 My accountant told me . . .
97 Switchboard abbr.
98 Smidgen
99 Med. test
100 Bald bird
101 Cold-war accord
103 Pub order
104 Comic Sahl
106 My son's teacher told me . . .
114 Pester
116 Dickens villain
117 Turgenev's birthplace
118 Screenwriter James
119 Verdi opera
120 Ages
121 "Good gracious!"
122 Liberate
123 "Children should — . . ."
124 Bump
125 Dover's st.
126 Semester

DOWN

1 Shopping center
2 Actor Epps
3 Roman historian
4 Correct a text
5 Olympic award
6 Harmon or Dickinson
7 Rock hound?
8 Claim
9 Sniggled
10 From the top
11 Bow part
12 Southwestern sticker
13 — -garde
14 "Revenge of the —" ('84 film)
15 Middle Earth denizens
16 Author Grafton
17 Dist.
19 Entertain lavishly
27 Bouquet
28 Geometry term
29 Spout like Cicero
33 Turn blue?
34 Caviar
35 Yours and mine
36 Turf
37 Food fish
38 Urges
39 Sandwich spread
40 Sleeve contents?
41 Third degree?
43 Element
44 Speak with a forked tongue
45 Roth —
46 Kimono closer
47 Devilfish
53 Good buddy
54 High up
55 Make a muumuu
56 Singer Cleo
57 Pie nut
58 Jacket info
59 Letter from Athens
60 Invites on a date
62 Henley happening
64 Model's job
66 — Dinh Diem
67 He's a doll
69 "A Dandy in —" ('68 film)
70 Communist council
71 Plant disease
72 Grab all the goodies
79 Ms. Lupino
81 Wahine's wreath
82 1914-18 letters
83 Perform in "Parsifal"
84 Backer
85 — populi
86 Gravy ingredient
87 Assoc.
89 Cubic meas.
90 Lady of the lea
92 "Without You" singer
93 Backslide
94 Got by, with "out"
95 Announce
96 Birmingham bye-bye
101 Marshy lowland
102 Usher's beat
103 Winning
104 Highway sign
105 Ron of "Superfly"
106 Infuriates
107 Impatient interrogative
108 Architect Saarinen
109 — the line (obeyed)
110 Huck's craft
111 Brute
112 — -do-well
113 Appear to be
114 Elf
115 Gobbled up



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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. ANIMAL ADJECTIVES: What is a group of dragons called?
2. TELEVISION: What was Norm's last name in the sitcom series "Cheers"?
3. GEOGRAPHY: Lapland is a region of what country?
4. ARTS: An eisteddfod–a festival of music, literature and performing arts–is held in which country?
5. ANATOMY: Where is the retina located?
6. HISTORY: Who was known as "The Iron Chancellor"?
7. U.S. STATES: The Catskill Mountains are located in which U.S. state?
8. FOOD & DRINK: What kind of plant does the flavoring saffron come from?
9. MOVIES: Who directed the movie "The Lost Weekend"?
10. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What kind of creature does the Australian bandicoot most resemble?

Amber Waves — by Dave T. Phipps

MY MOM TOLD ME THAT I CAN SPEND THE NIGHT UNDER TWO CONDITIONS.
GREAT! WE CAN STAY UP LATE AND EAT JUNKFOOD!
CAN'T, THOSE ARE THE CONDITIONS SHE MADE.
WOW, YOU REALLY NEED BETTER REPRESENTATION!

The Spats — by Jeff Pickering

Answers

1. A wayr
2. Peterson
3. Finland
4. Wales
5. The eye
6. Otto von Bismarck, Germany
7. New York
8. Crocus flower
9. Billy Wilder
10. A large rat

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Saturday's Answers

S	C	O	N	E		D	I	M	E		G	P	O	
T	A	L	O	N		O	O	P	S		L	U	G	
A	P	E	R	S	O	N	W	H	O	C	A	N	T	
B	E	G		U	L	N	A		E	L	I	T	E	
			R	E	D	E		P	R	E	D	A	T	E
P	A	S	O			S	H	A	R	I		E	A	S
E	N	J	O	Y	T	I	C	H	A	I	K	O	V	S
T	I	P		M	I	T	C	H	O		E	P	E	
A	T	E		A	L	A	R	M		C	E	D	A	R
L	A	R	S		L	I	V	E		J	E	R	I	
	E	Y	E		R	E		M	U	S	I	C		I
G	I	L	B	E	R	T		O	M	A	N		C	I
A	D	M	I	T		R	O	T	O	R		F	A	V
R	E	A	L		F	O	O	T		S	E	N	O	R
B	A	I	N		W	I	T	H	O	U	T	K	N	O
		R	E	E	T			P	R	I	C	E		K
	M	A	R	E		E	M	I	R	A	T	E		E
F	O	R	A		D	E	N	I	M		E	T	O	N
R	O	S	I	N	A		T	O	S	P	E	L	L	H
E	R	O	D	E	D		A	N	E		L	O	W	A
T	E	N	S	E	D		L	E	S		M	O	O	N

S	C	O	N	E		D	I	M	E		G	P	O	
T	A	L	O	N		O	O	P	S		L	U	G	
A	P	E	R	S	O	N	W	H	O	C	A	N	T	
B	E	G		U	L	N	A		E	L	I	T	E	
			R	E	D	E		P	R	E	D	A	T	E
P	A	S	O			S	H	A	R	I		E	A	S
E	N	J	O	Y	T	I	C	H	A	I	K	O	V	S
T	I	P		M	I	T	C	H	O		E	P	E	
A	T	E		A	L	A	R	M		C	E	D	A	R
L	A	R	S		L	I	V	E		J	E	R	I	
	E	Y	E		R	E		M	U	S	I	C		I
G	I	L	B	E	R	T		O	M	A	N		C	I
A	D	M	I	T		R	O	T	O	R		F	A	V
R	E	A	L		F	O	O	T		S	E	N	O	R
B	A	I	N		W	I	T	H	O	U	T	K	N	O
		R	E	E	T			P	R	I	C	E		K
	M	A	R	E		E	M	I	R	A	T	E		E
F	O	R	A		D	E	N	I	M		E	T	O	N
R	O	S	I	N	A		T	O	S	P	E	L	L	H
E	R	O	D	E	D		A	N	E		L	O	W	A
T	E	N	S	E	D		L	E	S		M	O	O	N

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 6-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $27 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$27
• 5-Liner	$24	$39
• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

FOR SALE
YELLOW FLAME TREES
3-6ft $30.00–$40.00
Call 322-5691·285-6626
Ask for Capt. Carl or Lian

QQ RENT A CAR
Starting as low as... **$25.00**
Call: 233-9889 or 483-8866
$100 Security Deposit Required
Please visit QQ Store Garapan (2nd Road behind Fire Station)

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Oceanview Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Night-time security. 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

WHATZIT Solution: Au pair

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

2 Bedroom Apartment for Rent.
For $230.00 / month
Koblerville, please call 288-0728

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/ 24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Right behind NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Special rates for NMC faculty/ students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

DRUNK DRIVING
Over the limit. Under arrest.

There's nothing Super about the Pittsburgh Steelers anymore.
28 SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2009
25
Angamwas rules 4-person
Saipan Tribune
Sports
NMIVA for gra
Two-person
sand to grass
Islands Volley
Annual Revers
nament at Navy
FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
TUESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2009
XIX, Issue No. 299
Fitial eyes Cepeda's re-appointment to NMC board. PAG
DPH to ask for extension of emergency declaration. PAG
$1.35M earmarks for NMI now up for Obama's
By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
The fate of the $1.35 million in CNMI special projects funding requested by Del-
egate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) now rests with President Obama, after the conference report on the omnibus Fiscal Year 2010 spending bill cleared the U.S. Senate on Sunday.
Sablan's request for $1.35 million to fund seven programs and projects is contained in the Conference Report on Fiscal Year 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act, a $447-billion spending measure for
several
agencie
On a
Senat
Fitial: Ombudsman shouldn't accommodate 'overstayers'
10 DAYS to go before Christmas
OPINION METER
This week's poll:
Should NMC revisit its policy of allowing the termination of NMC employees without cause?
Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.
Immigration
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WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

OH OH

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Find today's solution in this section

LeBron, Cavs beat Heat, win 10th straight

CLEVELAND (AP)—LeBronJames scored 36 points—17 on free throws—and Daniel Gibson added 12 after returning from the hospital as the Cleveland Cavaliers ran their winning streak to 10 with a 102-84 win over Dwyane Wade and the Miami Heat on Thursday night.

James started at point guard for Gibson and added eight assists and seven rebounds. A one-on-one showdown between superstars James and Wade never materialized as the Cavs controlled the game and attempted 36 free throws to 14 for Miami.

Wade finished with 24 points on 11 of 26 shooting and Michael Beasley had 21.

Gibson didn't enter the game until the second half after joining his pregnant fiancee, singer Keyshia Cole, who was hospitalized for precautionary reasons. He made two 3-pointers in the fourth when the Cavs outscored the Heat 21-13.

The last time James and Wade hooked up on Jan. 12, they scored a combined 70 points in an anything-you-can-do-I-can-do-better matchup. Both provided their usual jaw-dropping plays again, but James was able to improve to 13-9 against Wade, including 9-1 in Cleveland.

The Heat, which lost in Boston on Wednesday, have dropped four straight and six of seven.

Miami was within eight after three quarters, but the Cavs outscored them 10-3 to open the fourth, taking a 91-76 lead on a 3 by Gibson. Wade tried to keep Miami close but didn't have nearly as much help as James, who has adapted his game lately to fill the backcourt void.

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James, center, shoots over Miami Heat forward Dorell Wright, left, and Udonis Haslem in the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010, in Cleveland.

While James was able to draw fouls—he shot 21 free throws to 2 for Wade—his Miami counterpart wasn't able to get as many calls despite being knocked down on a few occasions. Twice, Wade ran into Shaquille O'Neal, his former Heat teammate, and found himself looking at the ceiling without hearing a whistle.

O'Neal added 13 points and eight rebounds in 21 minutes, yet another strong, efficient performance from the big man who has stepped his game up of late.

He posted up and scored on a pair of short jumpers as the Cavs pushed their lead to 12 late in the third.

James started at point guard for Gibson, who has done a nice job filling in while Mo Williams and Delonte West recover from injuries.

Gibson rejoined his teammates in the second quarter, and moments after he came back, James, who was in attack mode from the start, scored on an alley-oop dunk, fed J.J. Hickson for a slam and set up Zydrunas Ilgauskas for a 3 that put the Cavaliers ahead by five.

Wade countered with a 3 and split Cleveland's defense for a dunk as the Heat closed within 56-52 at half.

Hickson posterized Wade with a monster dunk in the first. Hickson hustled to pick up a loose ball near midcourt and then raced down the floor before throwing down a two-hander on Wade, who probably would have been better off if he had let the 6-foot-9 Hickson pass freely.

Wade tried to return the facial in the third, but was rejected at the rim by Hickson.

Blazers 96, Spurs 93

At Portland, Ore., LaMarcus Aldridge had 28 points and 13 rebounds and the Portland Trail Blazers rallied for a victory over the San Antonio Spurs.

The Spurs led by 10 points early in the fourth quarter but the Blazers made it 85-83 on Nicolas Batum's layup.

After Manu Ginobili hit a jumper for the Spurs, Martell Webster's 3-pointer narrowed it to 87-86 with 3:38 left.

Aldridge hit a jumper with 2:54 left to give the Blazers the lead and Webster dropped another 3 to make it 91-87 with 22.9 seconds to go.

With the victory, Portland swept the three-game series over San Antonio this season. The Blazers have won their last five against the Spurs.

Webster finished with 21 points and made all five of his 3-pointers.

Ginobili led the Spurs with 21 points and Tim Duncan had 15 points and 12 rebounds.

The Spurs saw the return of guard Tony Parker, who missed the previous three games with a mid left ankle sprain. Parker, who started, pounced on the Blazers early with 16 first-half points and 18 for the game.

Portland remained without All-Star guard Brandon Roy, who continues to nurse a left hamstring injury.

Roy, who is averaging 23.1 points, has missed 11 of the Blazers' last 12 games. He was originally hurt during the third quarter of the Blazers' 120-108 home win over the Milwaukee Bucks on Jan. 13.

Portland coach Nate McMillan said before the game that he is hopeful Roy will return for Saturday night's game at home against the Los Angeles Lakers.

Clippers GM Dunleavy drops coaching duties

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mike Dunleavy stepped down as the Los Angeles Clippers' head coach Thursday, retaining his job as general manager.

Assistant coach Kim Hughes will be the interim replacement for Dunleavy, who has led the Clippers to just one winning season since taking over the star-crossed franchise in 2003.

The Clippers abruptly announced the moves in an afternoon news release, saying the decision was voluntary and mutual. Los Angeles (21-28) has lost five of six heading into Saturday's home game against San Antonio, with another once-promising season in danger of slipping away.

"It just seems clear that the team needs a fresh voice, and we hope that our players will respond in a positive way," Clippers president Andy Roeser said in a statement.

Despite a talented roster including Baron Davis, Chris Kaman, Eric Gordon and Marcus Camby, the Clippers are in 12th place in the Western Conference. Los Angeles dropped a season-worst seven games under .500 with six losses on a just-completed eight-game road trip.

Perhaps the Clippers Curse has a bit to do with it as well: Blake Griffin, the No. 1 overall pick in last summer's draft, will miss the entire season after breaking his kneecap in Los Angeles' final preseason game.

AP

Los Angeles Clippers coach Mike Dunleavy reacts to a call in the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Cleveland Cavaliers, Sunday, Jan. 31, 2010, in Cleveland.

Dunleavy, who said he had "several conversations" recently with owner Donald Sterling about the Clippers' direction, is the winningest coach in franchise history—admittedly not a high bar to clear on a team with just two winning seasons in 30 years and only one playoff series victory since moving to Los Angeles in 1984.

"I've come to the conclusion that this is the ideal time for me to direct my efforts toward the many personnel opportunities that lie before us, such as the trade market, the draft and the free agent process," said Dunleavy, who added GM duties to his coaching responsibilities in 2008. "We fully expect to be active and productive on all those fronts."

Hughes, a former ABA and NBA player who has never been a head coach, has been Dunleavy's assistant since the start in Los Angeles. He spent several years on the Nuggets' bench before joining the Clippers, and has been a scout in Denver and Milwaukee.

Dunleavy was 215-325 in 6 1/2 seasons on the bench, and Los Angeles made the playoffs just once in his first six seasons, getting within one game of the Western Conference finals in 2006. The Clippers haven't been back to the playoffs since, winning just 42 games in the past two seasons.

Dunleavy played for Philadelphia, Houston, San Antonio and Milwaukee during his career, but the Brooklyn native's entire coaching career has been downhill from his debut season with the Los Angeles Lakers in 1990-91, when he reached the NBA finals. After just two seasons with the Lakers, he coached four losing seasons in Milwaukee before a moderately successful four-season run with the Portland Trail Blazers.

After hiring Dunleavy in 2003, the much-criticized Sterling showed considerable patience, extending the coach's contract through 2011 after that sole playoff run—and even sticking with him through the Clippers' 19-63 misery of a 2008-09 season.

Dunleavy's record as a personnel executive is actually fairly solid, which made his failures as the Clippers' coach even more glaring. He replaced Elgin Baylor as the Clippers' top basketball executive before last season, uprooting Baylor from a job he had held since 1986.

Despite adding Rasual Butler and Craig Smith to a well-stocked roster that still should have ample salary cap space to sign a major free agent this summer, the Clippers have struggled even to reach .500 this season.

"As we approach the trade deadline, the NBA draft and the upcoming free agent period, our team is very well-positioned from a salary cap standpoint," Roeser said. "Mike's experienced input will be vitally important as we continue to develop our young talented nucleus and shape our team's future."

Colts will derail Saints' Super goal

AP

Mike Petrie and his four-year-old son, Elijah, take an evening ride along the water in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Tuesday, February 2, 2010. The New Orleans Saints will face the Indianapolis Colts in Super Bowl XLIV.

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida (AP)—The New Orleans Saints and Indianapolis Colts are expected to pile on the points in Sunday's Super Bowl.

The Saints scored a league-high 510 points and ranked first in total offense. The Colts scored 416 and ranked ninth.

New Orleans has the league's most accurate quarterback, Drew Brees, throwing to a deep receiving corps led by 1,000-yard wideout Marques Colston. He has three dependable running backs, including the mercurial Reggie Bush. Both his tight ends, Jeremy Shockey and David Thomas, find holes in the middle of defenses and move the chains.

Indianapolis offers Peyton Manning, the only four-time league MVP, throwing to a deep group of targets led by two 1,000-yard receivers: Reggie Wayne and tight end Dallas Clark.

And while the Colts' defense has been stingy in the playoffs and the Saints force lots of turnovers, this could be a matchup that wears out the scoreboard at Sun Life Stadium.

Indianapolis, winner of the last Super Bowl in Miami three years ago, is a 5-point favorite.

"We have to be balanced and mix the run and the pass," Brees said. "We have to have a plan for their pass rush, because we know how they can rush the passer. Take care of the football, try to keep Peyton and that offense off the field as much as possible and take advantage of the opportunities when we get them.

"You can't be one-dimensional against these guys, because they are too smart for that. You have to be able to do both. If you can do it efficiently, possess the ball, convert third downs, keep them off the field, eat up the time of possession—all of those things that you talk about as an offense, that's the key for success."

Except that's not necessarily what the Saints do best. They are not a grind-it-out team. New Orleans had explosive plays this season from 75, 68, 66, 55, 54, 41, 37 and 36 yards. The Saints ranked sixth in yards rushing in 2009, but they've won 15 of their 18 games this season because of their passing prowess.

New Orleans allowed just 20 sacks during the season, but that's seven more than the Colts conceded. With defensive end Dwight Freeney, the Colts' primary pass rusher, ailing with ankle ligament damage, it could present Brees more opportunities to throw.

The matchups of Colts defensive backs Antoine Bethea, Melvin Bullitt, Kelvin Hayden, Jerraud Powers and Jacob Lacey against Colston, Robert Meachem, Devery Henderson, Shockey, Thomas, Bush and Pierre Thomas will be intriguing.

Still, the key to the game will be Manning against a vulnerable New Orleans defense. And that's the difference.

When New York Jets star Darrelle Revis, the best cover cornerback in the league, blanketed Wayne in the AFC title game, Manning looked elsewhere. Youngsters Pierre Garcon and Austin Collie were unstoppable. The Saints don't have a Revis, and their defense doesn't come close to matching what Indianapolis faced from the Jets and Baltimore Ravens.

Bottom line: Manning may be playing the best football of his sensational career — certainly good enough to win the Colts' second NFL championship in four seasons.

Dustin Johnson takes lead at Riviera

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Dustin Johnson was determined to get off to a good start in the Northern Trust Open, so for the first time, he decided against trying to drive the 10th green at Riviera and instead laid up with a 4-iron.

He made par, which never hurts. And then he took off.

Johnson birdied three of his next four holes, one of them with a 65-foot putt, and he kept bogeys off his card during a cool, gentle morning for a 7-under 64 to build a one-shot lead Thursday over Andres Romero and Kevin Stadler.

"Had good vibes going all day, and just hit the ball really good all day long," Johnson said.

Romero had good vibes going for most of the day. The dynamic Argentine had eight birdies to offset a double bogey on the ninth hole when he didn't listen to his caddie. Romero finished with four straight birdies for a 65. Stadler had the best score among late starters, opening with a 30 on the back nine. He played the final eight holes in 1 over.

Brandt Snedeker, coming off a runner-up finish last week at Torrey Pines, and Ricky Barnes were at 66. Steve Stricker had a 67 despite a three-putt bogey at No. 3, missing his par putt from 2 feet when he couldn't get the sound of a nearby jackhammer out of his head.

David Duval and Ernie Els were in the large group at 68.

Phil Mickelson thought he might be among the leaders. Going for an unprecedented third straight victory at Riviera, he was 3 under midway through his round. He finished with three bogeys over his last four holes—the exception was a 6-foot birdie putt he missed—and wound up with a 1-over 72.

"I had it right there with five or six holes to go, and I let it go," Mickelson said.

Mickelson took the Ping Eye2 wedge with square grooves out of his bag this week, although one wish was fulfilled when two players continued using it—Hunter Mahan and Fred Couples, who had a 69.

The wedge is approved for play under a legal settlement from two decades ago.

Couples was inspired by the fuss from last week, generated mainly by Scott McCarron saying it was "cheating" for players like Mickelson to use it. He also was impressed that Mickelson, given his stature as the top player in golf while Tiger Woods is away, was willing to take any criticism by using the club.

"I said, 'I think that's strong, and I'm going to use one next week,'" Couples said. "He said, 'Man, I think that's great.' I get out here and he's not using it."

Couples said the Ping wedge is the best one he has, although he suggested he would look at others as he played more tournaments.

Mahan said he never considered anything wrong with a club that was approved under the rules.

Mickelson's reason for using the wedge was to call attention to the USGA's process of changing rules, which he has referred to as "ridiculous." Mahan's reason was different.

"It spins a little bit more," he said.

Even so, it didn't help on the 10th hole, when Mahan went bunker-to-bunker and made double bogey. Heading down the 11th fairway, John Wood, his caddie who found the old Ping wedge, said with a laugh, "If we had V-grooves, we would have had to hit four times instead of three."

The par-4 10th hole is among the most famous in golf, and one of the best tests among short par 4s anywhere in the world. It measured 303 yards for the opening round, with an emphasis on angles more than how far the ball is struck.

Johnson is ample long, but this time hit 4-iron to about 85 yards, a safe wedge to some 18 feet and two putts for par.

"I didn't make birdie, but it was an easy 4," he said. "And I wanted it to be easy."

He made the rest of his round look that way. He was on or around the greens on two of the par 5s, received a gift with the monster putt on No. 12, and the only time he came close to a bogey was at the par-3 fourth, when he went long and chipped to 8 feet.

Romero, coming off such a poor year that he's not eligible for any of the majors, also had an easy time except for the ninth. From a fairway bunker, his caddie wanted him to hit 7-iron short of the green and get up-and-down for par.

"I'm so stubborn, I stayed with the 6-iron," Romero said. "And it buried in the bunker."

He took double bogey, then followed with his burst of birdies at the end. Romero tied for third at Riviera a year ago.

Hudson, Twins agree to $5M, 1-year contract

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The Minnesota Twins will take a new middle infield into their new ballpark.

Second baseman Orlando Hudson and the Twins agreed Thursday night to a $5 million, one-year contract, adding another All-Star to the roster of the reigning AL Central champions.

Hudson gives the Twins a veteran at the top of the batting order with a .282 career average and four Gold Glove awards. He played in his second All-Star game last season, his only year with the Los Angeles Dodgers after four with the Toronto Blue Jays and three with the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Hudson, who will likely bat second, will form an all-new double-play tandem for the Twins with shortstop J.J. Hardy, who came in an earlier offseason trade from the Milwaukee Brewers. The 32-year-old Hudson batted .283 with 35 doubles, six triples, nine homers and 62 RBIs in 551 at-bats for the Dodgers last year.

As part of the contract, Minnesota agreed not to offer salary arbitration next fall if Hudson becomes a Type A free agent. Hudson became the 100th player with an announced agreement among the 171 in baseball who filed for free agency after the World Series.

The Twins aren't usually this active in the offseason, but with AL MVP Joe Mauer in his prime and another elite player in first baseman Justin Morneau they've been driven this winter to upgrade their offense. With an extra surge of revenue from Target Field, which will officially open in April, the Twins are also spending on salaries like they've never spent before.

The payroll will be well over $90 million, by far a franchise record.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	31	16	.660	—
Toronto	27	23	.540	5 1/2
New York	19	29	.396	12 1/2
Philadelphia	17	31	.354	14 1/2
New Jersey	4	44	.083	27 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	33	16	.673	—
Atlanta	31	17	.646	1 1/2
Charlotte	24	24	.500	8 1/2
Miami	24	26	.480	9 1/2
Washington	16	32	.333	16 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	40	11	.784	—
Chicago	23	24	.489	15
Milwaukee	21	26	.447	17
Indiana	17	32	.347	22
Detroit	16	31	.340	22

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	31	18	.633	—
San Antonio	28	20	.583	2 1/2
Houston	26	22	.542	4 1/2
Memphis	26	22	.542	4 1/2
New Orleans	26	23	.531	5

Northwest Division

Denver	33	16	.673	—
Utah	30	18	.625	2 1/2
Portland	30	22	.577	4 1/2
Oklahoma City	28	21	.571	5
Minnesota	11	38	.224	22

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	38	12	.760	—
Phoenix	30	21	.588	8 1/2
L.A. Clippers	21	28	.429	16 1/2
Sacramento	16	32	.333	21
Golden State	13	35	.271	24

Yesterday's Games

Cleveland 102, Miami 86
Portland 96, San Antonio 93

NORTHERN TRUST OPEN SCORES

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Scores Thursday from the Northern Trust Open, a $6.4 million US PGA Tour event at 7,325-yard, par-71 (35-36) Riviera Country Club:

PARTIAL FIRST ROUND

Dustin Johnson	32-32—64
Andres Romero	34-31—65
Kevin Stadler	35-30—65
Ricky Barnes	33-33—66
Brandt Snedeker	32-34—66
Steve Lowery	35-32—67
Steve Stricker	31-36—67
Cameron Beckman	34-33—67
Jesper Parnevik	32-36—68
Rory Sabbatini	33-35—68
Scott Verplank	33-35—68
Troy Matteson	35-33—68
J.B. Holmes	36-32—68
Stephen Ames	32-36—68
Luke Donald	34-34—68
Charley Hoffman	33-35—68
Ryo Ishikawa	35-33—68
Jonathan Byrd	35-33—68
Fredrik Jacobson	35-33—68
Roland Thatcher	33-35—68
Ernie Els	32-36—68
David Duval	36-32—68
Justin Rose	36-33—69
Paul Goydos	33-36—69
Kevin Streelman	34-35—69
Kevin Sutherland	32-37—69
Michael Allen	35-34—69
Nicholas Thompson	34-35—69
Jason Bohn	33-36—69
D.A. Points	34-35—69
Tim Clark	35-34—69
Mike Weir	34-35—69
Matt Kuchar	34-35—69
Fred Couples	34-35—69
Tim Wilkinson	33-36—69
Nick O'Hern	34-35—69
Craig Bowden	36-33—69
Rod Pampling	31-39—70
Chad Campbell	37-33—70
John Merrick	35-35—70
Jeff Klauk	34-36—70
Webb Simpson	35-35—70
Briny Baird	33-37—70
Jeff Overton	34-36—70
George McNeill	35-35—70
John Mallinger	34-36—70
Ryan Moore	34-36—70
Will MacKenzie	35-35—70
Bo Van Pelt	35-35—70
Carl Pettersson	36-34—70
Brett Quigley	34-36—70
Steve Marino	36-34—70
Matt Bettencourt	33-37—70
J.J. Henry	34-36—70
Bubba Watson	35-36—71
Michael Letzig	36-35—71
Marc Leishman	34-37—71
Hunter Mahan	33-38—71
Y.E. Yang	35-36—71
Jim Furyk	36-35—71
Stewart Cink	37-34—71
Angel Cabrera	35-36—71
Justin Leonard	35-36—71
K.J. Choi	35-36—71
Johnson Wagner	36-35—71
Jason Dufner	33-38—71
Greg Owen	35-36—71
Brenden Pappas	36-35—71
James Driscoll	36-35—71
Woody Austin	36-35—71
Chris Stroud	35-36—71
Jimmy Walker	35-36—71
Anthony Kim	34-37—71
John Rollins	32-39—71
Parker McLachlin	35-36—71
Stuart Appleby	34-37—71
Greg Chalmers	35-36—71
Jeff Quinney	36-35—71
Bryce Molder	36-35—71
Joshua Wooding	34-37—71
Brian Davis	35-37—72
Corey Pavin	35-37—72
Lee Janzen	37-35—72
Bob Estes	35-37—72
Padraig Harrington	35-37—72
D.J. Trahan	36-36—72
Martin Laird	36-36—72
Davis Love III	36-36—72
Charles Howell III	36-36—72
Scott Piercy	36-36—72
Charlie Wi	38-34—72
Aaron Baddeley	36-36—72
Kevin Na	36-36—72
Bill Haas	36-36—72
Mark Wilson	36-36—72
Phil Mickelson	34-38—72
Robert Allenby	36-36—72
Bill Lunde	35-37—72
Pat Perez	36-37—73
Vijay Singh	38-35—73
Marc Turnesa	35-38—73
Steve Flesch	34-39—73
Ben Crane	35-38—73
Ryuji Imada	34-39—73
Ted Purdy	38-35—73
Vaughn Taylor	39-34—73
Adam Scott	35-38—73
Jerry Kelly	37-36—73
Ben Curtis	35-38—73
Tim Petrovic	35-38—73
James Nitties	36-37—73
Scott McCarron	37-37—74
Richard S. Johnson	38-36—74
Chris Couch	38-36—74
Shigeki Maruyama	36-38—74
Rich Beem	35-39—74
Nathan Green	37-37—74
Michael Bradley	35-39—74
Jason Day	35-39—74
Jeff Templeton	37-37—74
Alex Cejka	38-37—75
Daniel Chopra	35-40—75
Rocco Mediate	37-38—75
John Senden	37-38—75
Chez Reavie	36-39—75
Nick Watney	39-37—76
Michael Sim	40-37—77
Brad Faxon	41-37—78
Mathew Goggin	39-39—78

Failed to completed first round

Rickie Fowler	DNF
Alex Prugh	DNF
Brett Lederer	DNF

Note: Play was suspended due to darkness. Three golfers will finish the first round Friday.

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Super Bowl Monday: Colts or Saints?

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Super Bowl XLIV will feature one of the era's most dominating teams, the Indianapolis Colts, against the upstart New Orleans Saints.

A win for Peyton Manning's crew would be their second in four years, while a victory for Drew Brees and company will be the once-moribund franchise's first ever in the National Football League.

Here on Saipan, gridiron fans of both teams can't wait for Super Bowl Sunday to begin (Actually it's a Monday here), as the streets of the island are expected to be traffic-free with almost everyone watching the Colts and the Saints battle it out for NFL supremacy. Below are the predictions of football fans on the big game:

■ ■ ■

"Since the New England Patriots missed getting in. I have to go with the Saints. Just like Boston Red Sox fans root for any team playing against the New York Yankees. New England Patriots fans root against Payton Manning and the Colts, it is another great rivalry. Also, New Orleans Saints are a great comeback story and it would be great for their fans."

Jim Arenovski
Delta Management Corp.

■ ■ ■

"I really wanted the Chargers to make it to the Super Bowl, but since they did not, then I'll go with the Colts. Last year, I read former coach Tony Dungy's autobiography and was impressed with his professionalism and teamwork. They also have a great quarterback."

Kanae Quinn
Pacific Islands Club

■ ■ ■

"For the past three years my wife always picks the winners, and she chose Colts this time. But I'll be rooting for the Saints. We always wind up on the opposite ends of the Super Bowl every year, so that makes it more exciting to watch. It goes back and forth, and I think this game will have lots of it. The quarterbacks are so good, man, they can throw forever. It makes you stop what you're doing for those few seconds to see if the ball will be caught. I can't wait to watch."

Ed Arriola
Tan Holdings

■ ■ ■

"I go for the Colts because the Saints defense will fall victim to Peyton Manning's ability to make adjustments and get the ball out quickly. The Saints aggressive 'blitz happy defense' may work early, but as soon as Peyton Manning figures it out, and he will, the Colts will pick apart the Saints defense through the air. A Super Bowl victory for the Saints would be great for the city of New Orleans but I don't see their defense matching up against the best mind in the game."

Joey Dela Cruz
CNMI Office of Homeland Security

■ ■ ■

"Actually, I am not a football fan, however I always cheer for the underdogs. I like to see them win and prove others wrong."

Ben Babauta
DFS Saipan

■ ■ ■

"I will go for the Saints. They have Brees who is a great quarterback. Reggie Bush is an explosive running back and the Saints defense has depth."

Brenda Schultz
CNMI Women's National football player

■ ■ ■

"This Super Bowl is going to be a battle between two teams with the best records in the NFL and very explosive offense. It's going to be a close one. However, the key to this game is not the offense, it is the defense and the Colts have it. I'm going with the Colts."

Jerry Diaz
Hoopaholics coach

■ ■ ■

"1969 New York Jets, the best team EVER!!!! Just kidding, that was the last time the Super Bowl was interesting to me, so I do not have a pick."

Wolf Mojica
Taga, Inc. president

■ ■ ■

"Offense wins games. Defense wins championships. I'll go for the Colts."

Gilbert Birnbrich
Saipan Outrigger Canoe Club.

■ ■ ■

"I am not really a big football fan, but I have heard that its potentially be a very close and high scoring, fun game to watch."

Laurie Peterka
Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association

EBISUYA

From Page 28

within six at the end of the third period, 70-76.

A Ferdie de la Torre three-point play in the early goings of the fourth period increased the lead to seven, 81-74. However, Francis Rebuyon and William Opone teamed up in a short 7-0 rally to tie the count, 81-all, with less seven minutes left in the match.

A split from Ed Manalili gave Loyola its last taste of the lead, 84-83, before Ebisuya took over on Jun Abedes' triple and Rebuyon's back-to-back fastbreak layups.

Loyola had a chance to inch in closer, but a visibly tired Ed Cosino went 0-for-4 from the foul line and had no teammates to turn to for help on offense.

Point guard Elmer Pineda fouled out with over eight minutes left in the fourth quarter and Ariel Jinang followed suit midway in that canto with only two points to his credit. James Abuy, who drilled three triples in the first period, was held to two points in the fourth and fouled out, too in the last two minutes.

Danny Bicera, who scored in double figures in Loyola's last two wins, and Melvin Villarin were out in Game 1 due to knee injuries, forcing Cosino to play extended minutes and lose steam in the fourth period.

Ebisuya came in full force for Game 1 and always had fresh legs in the match, giving the pennant champion a strong chance to bounce back in the payoff quarter. Four Ebisuya players made at least two field goals apiece in the fourth canto with Rebuyon leading the way with 12 points. Loyola had only Jun Tabora and Jimmy Salazar drilling more than one field goal and their baskets came when the game was already decided.

Masters

Ebisuya 99 – Rebuyon 26, Opone 20, Santos 15, Abedes 12, Moises 12, Viola 6, Olivos 4, Casabuena 3.

University of Loyola 93 – Tabora 29, de la Torre 18, Abuy 14, Salazar 14, Cosino 14, Brien 6, Manalili 3, Jinang 2.

Scoring by quarters: 25-30, 47-58, 70-76, 99-93.

Open

Noni Saipan 96 – Bernardo 22, Abuel 16, De Vero 15, Aquino 14, Basila 10, Tamayo 9, Demapan 6, Mortos 4, Pantaleon 2.

Saipan Fresh Market 87 – Sanciangco 34, Estolas 25, Pagarao 14, Ja. Villacrusis 6,De Guzman 4, Opone 4, Gapor 2.

Scoring by quarters: 15-22, 42-41, 71-59, 96-87.

PASCUAL

From Page 28

ship with a net 71 on the strength of a gross 95 (51-44).

Cataluna and Miranda wound up in second place with their two-round net totals of 147. The nine-handicap Cataluna finished Day 2 with a net 72, while the 13-handicap Miranda matched Pascual's 71 but had a 76 in the first round.

Pascual dedicated his win to his family and thanked the club for the championship trophy and $300 cash prize that went with it.

Other Fil-Taga monthly winners that took part in the 2009 Golfer of the Year, with their net scores in parenthesis, were April winner Adony Matutino (151), March winner Nestor Siruelo (157), defending champion and January winner Mike Cruz (158), Ortiz (162), July winner Nono Bostre (162), December winner Jun Calma (163), June winner Rod Nimes (172). November winner Jason Gatdula (83) and September winner Mando Guban (79) were only able to play one round.

Established in 1993, Fil-Taga's tournaments operate under a computer-controlled handicap system that creates parity among players in the A and B Flights.

A Fil-Taga Ace of the Month champion is crowned monthly. Regular tournaments are scheduled once a month, normally every third Sunday. Green fees are in the $35 to $40 price range for most tournaments.

FANIANS

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ment played on the sand court of the Pacific Islands Club.

Joining Roscow on the champion team were siblings Youme and Larry Sharry and brothers Typhoon and Juluis Saito.

Fanians were off to a strong start in the opening set of Game 1 behind Roscow's impressive game at the net. Roscow made the lone goal in the series, founding the back of the net of Soul Rebels' goal in Game 1 to give Fanians a 27-14 win in the first set.

The second set was a closely fought match with Soul Rebels, composed of John Nekaifes, Mariano and Ben Lisua, Jordan Igisomar, Jimmy Pua, and Willie Aguilar, bouncing back with a 27-24 triumph.

The third set was another neck-and-neck battle, but this time Fanians prevailed, 25-20.

After three complete sets, Fanians were ahead by 15, 65-61. Soul Rebels were forced to win the third set by 16 points to steal the victory. A winning margin of less than 16 points would have sent Game 1 into overtime. Soul Rebels did neither of the two, as Fanians escaped with a 25-24 victory in the fourth set for a juice out win and a victory away from wrapping up the short series.

Roscow emerged as the heavy hitter in Game 1 with his 19 points, built on four aces, a xunk, three kees, and a goal.

In the series-clincher Game 2, Larry Sharry took over, firing 20 points after making two aces, three xunks, and five kees.

At the start of Game 2, Fanians survived Soul Rebels' late rally to eke out a 26-22 victory in the first set. Fanians went 2-0 in Game 2 when they prevailed by nine in the second set, 27-18. and moved a set away from sweeping Game 2 and the series with a 27-13 triumph in the third set.

In the fourth set, Soul Rebels kept pace with Fanians in the first part of the match, boosting their chances to extend the series. Soul Rebels even took a 14-13 lead, before Larry Sharry started connecting on kees to lift Fanians to a 26-14 win.

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Ebisuya, Noni steal Game 1

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Comebacks marked the title series opener in both the masters and open divisions of the 2009 PILCOWA Basketball League.

After falling behind by as much as 12 points in the third period, Ebisuya capitalized on an exhausted and depleted University of Loyola to pull off a come-from-behind 99-93 victory in Game 1 of their best-of-three finals series in the masters division on Thursday at the JP Center Basketball Court.

In the series opener in the open division, Noni Saipan overhauled a 10-point deficit in the first quarter and survived Saipan Fresh Market's fourth-quarter rally to move a win away from clinching the championship.

Noni Saipan and Ebisuya will both go for a sweep in their respective series tonight when they play in Game 2.

Noni led by as much as 15 points in the early going of the fourth canto before Ryan Sanciangco, James Villacrusis, and Jun Estolas teamed up in a 21-4 run in a span of five minutes to regain the driver's seat, 78-79.

A Sanciangco layup gave Saipan Fresh its biggest lead in the fourth, 81-78, before a triple from Wowie Abuel evened up the count, 81-all, going into the last four minutes of the game.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Noni Saipan's Jun Pantaleon makes a layup against Saipan Fresh Market's Lerio Pagarao during Game 1 of their title series in the open division of the PILCOWA caging on Thursday at the JP Center Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Lefty Francis Rebuyon of Ebisuya goes for a right-handed layup against University of Loyola's James Abuy Game 1 of their title series in the masters division of the PILCOWA caging on Thursday at the JP Center Basketball Court.

It was a nip-and-tuck match since then and the game was tied last at 86-all, before Kae Bernardo canned a side jumper to break the deadlock. Saipan Fresh stayed in the game, 87-88, after Estolas split his charities, but the Marvin Deocares-coached squad went 0-for-4 in its last two trips at the foul line and muffed a couple of shots in the paint in the last two minutes of the match to hand Game 1 to Noni.

After Saipan Fresh moved within one, Bon Tamayo went for a fastbreak layup to up the lead to three, 90-87, and Banjo Basila put the finishing touches on Noni Saipan's series-opener win with his 4-for-6 performance at the stripe.

Bernardo paced Noni with 22 points, while four of his teammates also contributed in double figures. Abuel added 16, Ivan De Vero chipped in 15, Glenn Aquino made 14, and Basila fired 10.

After Saipan Fresh led by as much as 10 in the first period, 19-9, Noni started to recover in the second quarter and ended the first half ahead, 42-41, on Abuel's buzzer-beating trey.

Noni picked up where it left off in the third to pad the lead to double digits before Saipan Fresh had its turn to launch a comeback in the fourth quarter.

Saipan Fresh bounced back despite the absence of Lerio Pagarao, who returned to the match only the last three minutes of the fourth period, replacing Villacrusis. Pagarao was cold off the bench, missing several shots, including two crucial free throws in the last two minutes of the match.

Folding up in stretch

Ebisuya waited for Loyola to fold up in the home stretch to steal Game 1.

Loyola enjoyed the biggest lead in the series opener at 12 points at the start of the second quarter before Ebisuya began its comeback in the third period and seized the momentum in the last six minutes of the final canto.

After trailing by 11 at the break, 47-58, Ebisuya moved

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Fanians sweep Rocball title

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REPORTER

Fanians wasted no opportunity in clinching the championship in the 2009-2010 World Organized Rocball Community League, sweeping Soul Rebels in their best-of-three title series last weekend at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Fanians won Games 1 and 2 convincingly, 102-85 and 106-67, to complete their domination of the league. The Jazz Roscow-led Fanians also topped the round-robin elimination with their 6-1 record and just before the playoffs started early last month, the eventual champions ruled a sand Rocball tourna-

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Fanians' Jazz Roscow and Soul Rebels' Marciano Igisomar battle in the net during the first set in Game 2 of their title series in the Rocball league last weekend at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Pascual is 2009 Golfer of the Year

Newcomer Larry Pascual was hailed 2009 Golfer of the Year after topping two rain-soaked rounds last Jan. 16 and 31 at the Marianas Country Club in Marpi.

The 51-year-old IT manager of Aqua Resort Club fired a 32-hole net score of 146 to finish a stroke ahead of eventual runners-up Joe Miranda and Freddie Cataluna in the season-ending tournament of the Fil-Taga Golfers Association.

The Baguio, Philippines native first carded a net 75 in the first day of the season-ending tournament. Pascual actually recorded a gross of 99 (47-52) but his total was slashed by virtue of his 24 handicap. Pascual was the club's October Ace in B Flight last year.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

2009 Fil-Taga Golfer of the Year champion Larry Pascual, left, receives his giant $300 check from Fil-Taga member Ted Malaran.

February winner Jun Ortiz topped Day 1 of the tourney after shooting a 73 (89 gross, 16 handicap), followed by October (A Flight) and May champions Cataluna and Pascual with their identical net 75s.

After the second round of the tournament was called off because of bad weather last Jan. 17, Fil-Taga moved Day 2 on Jan. 31 with Pascual eventually wresting the champion-

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